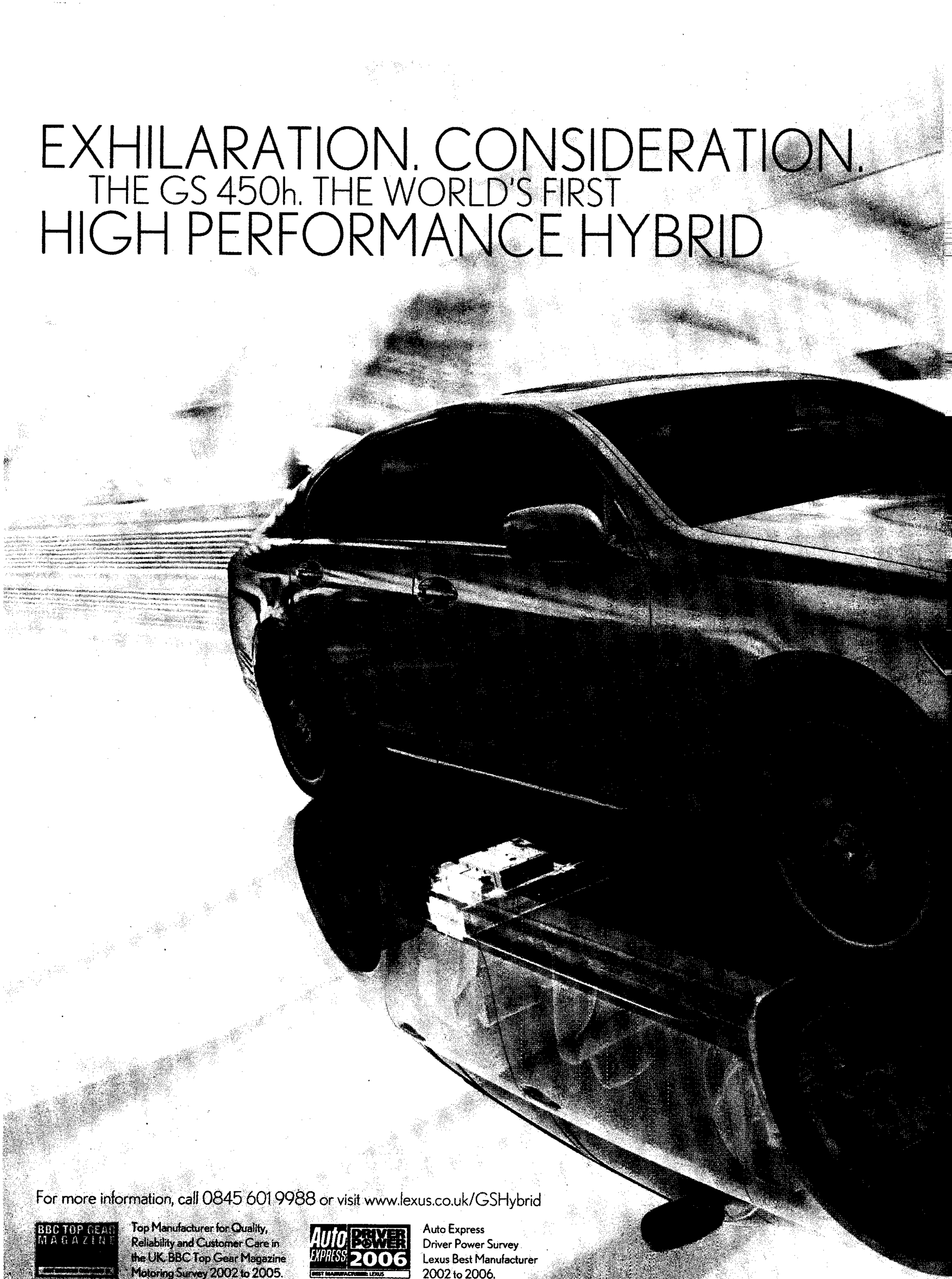
PRIVATE EYE

No. 1163
21 July –
3 August 2006
£1.40

LORD LEVY ARRESTED

EXHILARATION. CONSIDERATION.

THE GS 450h. THE WORLD'S FIRST HIGH PERFORMANCE HYBRID



For more information, call 0845 601 9988 or visit www.lexus.co.uk/GSHybrid

BBC TOP GEAR MAGAZINE

Top Manufacturer for Quality, Reliability and Customer Care in the UK. BBC Top Gear Magazine Motoring Survey 2002 to 2005.

Auto Express Driver Power 2006 Best Manufacturer: Lexus

Auto Express Driver Power Survey Lexus Best Manufacturer 2002 to 2006.

Model shown GS 450h SE with metallic paint £44,470 OTR. GS range prices start from £30,805 to £47,710 OTR. Prices correct at time of going to press and include VAT, delivery charges, number plates, full tank of fuel, one year's road fund licence and first registration fee. BBC Top Gear Magazine Motoring Survey

GS 450h fuel economy figures: extra-urban 7.2L/100km (39.2 mpg), urban 9.2L/100km (30.7mpg), combined 7.9L/100km (35.8mpg). CO_2 emissions 186g/km

The Lexus hybrid GS 450h

Step into the new GS 450h and sense a feeling of tranquillity. Put your foot down and experience smooth, seamless acceleration thanks to a combination of a V6 petrol engine and a powerful electric motor that provides exhilarating V8-like performance. At the same time CO_2 emissions and fuel consumption are kept to a category beating low. The new Lexus GS 450h. More car. More care.

LEXUS

The pursuit of perfection

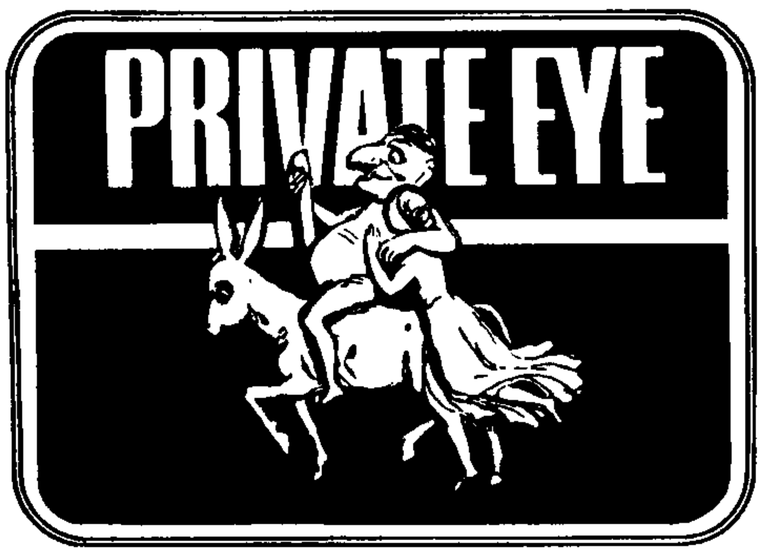
005 based on the results of questionnaires from over 52,000 motorists spanning 142 models from 37 manufacturers. Auto Express Driver Power Survey 2006 based on the results of questionnaires from 46,759 motorists. Calls to Lexus will be charged at local rate and may be monitored and recorded.

When you're busy the last thing you need is for your network to be the same.

come on!

No network is more reliable.
Make the most of now

vodafone



Cash for answers

■ **Murdoch MacLennan: Still a revolting *Mail*** 7

■ **MPs take on the spooks: Gavel Basher** 8

■ **Tony, Rupe, Des and the Filth Estate** 9

■ **Most creative! The BBC annual report** 10

■ **False Dawn for tax credits; BP and an oil pipeline of trouble: In the Back** 28-30

"It's a fair cop-out"

AT HIS recent appearance before the Commons liaison committee, Tony Blair admitted that he had never bothered to hold a vote in cabinet on any issue. It now seems the lack of dissent among his senior ministers may be even worse than we feared.

A story reaches us that Des Browne, who is currently Defence Secretary, was bold enough in his first cabinet meeting to voice disagreement with the prime minister on some matter. His remarks were heard in stony silence.

Then, while the meeting was still going on, Browne found little messages being passed to him discreetly by colleagues. They asked him what on earth he was playing at. Questioning Tony's judgment, apparently, simply was not acceptable behaviour for a Rt Hon Member of Cabinet.

AMONG the many signals in the past month of Gordon Brown's shift to the right – support for Trident, nuclear power, extending detention without trial for suspected terrorists, ripping up planning laws, etc – none was more symbolic than a trip to the City to open the new offices of investment bank Kleinwort.

Before "New" Labour came to power, Brown vociferously attacked all the big Tory privatisations and the lack of investment and fat cattery they would inevitably bring, opposing a number of them in parliament.

Nor was he too keen on the financiers who brought all these public services to the stock market, chief among them a venerable merchant bank then known as Kleinwort Benson – enlisted by the Tories for all the big ones: water, electricity, gas and telecoms.

So what was the theme of the prime minister-in-waiting's address as he opened Kleinwort's swanky new offices in Gresham Street, EC2V? Yep, Kleinwort's fantastic contribution to the British economy over the decades!

SPEAKING at the "21st Century Public Services" conference last month, Gordon Brown was keen to boast of his contribution thus far – in particular that "we pioneered PFI and public private partnerships".

Whoops! It wasn't long before the truth about PFI emerged. The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) report on the NHS's Local Improvement Finance Trust under which new primary care premises will be built was far from complimentary. The committee found that premises under LIFT cost several times more than those for standard GP practices and, by centralising primary care, can leave vulnerable people isolated. While there was no mechanism to evaluate whether the schemes were good value in the first place, private sector operators are already making fantastic returns.

Health minister Lord Warner was quick to trot out the standard PFI defence that the investments "would simply not have gone ahead if it were not for the scheme". What he didn't explain was the reason they wouldn't have happened: the chancellor insists on PFI for its flattering effect on his figures when the health service would be better off with standard borrowing.

LAST month's warning from the NHS watchdog Health Emergency that the loss of 1,000 jobs in one week was just the start of worse to come clearly irked those at the Department of Health.

In typical New Labour style, the DoH immediately tried to shoot the messenger. "Health Emergency's figures are a work of fiction. They are out of tune with what is really happening in the NHS. They should check their facts…" said a spokeswoman.

Claiming that most jobs that were to be lost were administrative and not clinical, she added: "Plucking figures out of thin air like this causes needless anxiety for the hard-working NHS staff." But not as much anxiety as figures given out by the DoH itself on the very same day. They put NHS job casualties that week at… er… 1,200.

THE Ministry of Defence, which gets condemned every year by parliament for the billions it wastes on procurement, has decided it needs is a "commercial director".

Naturally it has turned to a very commercial organisation, a consultancy firm, to find its man and has appointed PricewaterhouseCoopers partner Amyas Morse.

By an odd coincidence, PwC is the MoD's main adviser on the procurement procedures that have for years been found desperately wanting. But with one of its own in charge of the till, the tens of millions of pounds lavished on the firm annually for its services look safe for a while yet.

PS: Morse will join up with another former PwC partner, Nick Prior, who runs the department's PFI unit, doling out PFI deals on which firms like PwC provide such crucial and expensive consultancy.

SO THE £59m IT contract to develop a new payment and accounting system for the Department for Work and Pensions goes to Siemens Business Services. The modernised system is to handle more than £100bn of benefits, pensions and allowances to 17 million people.

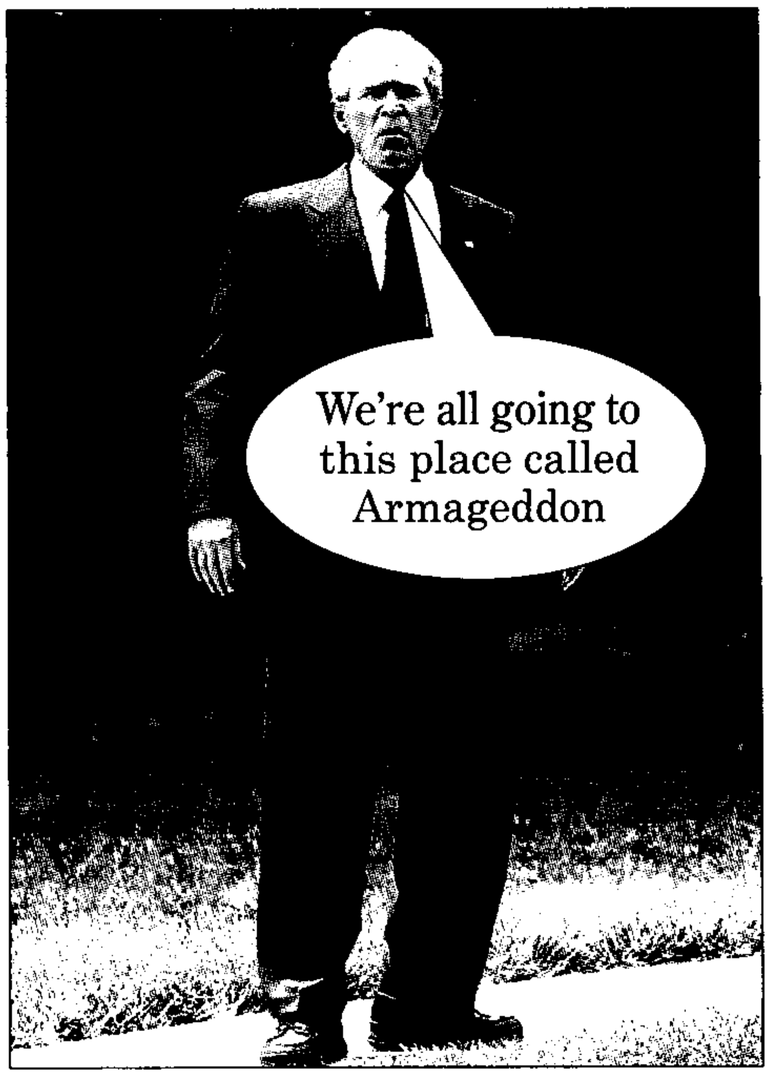
Let's hope it runs more smoothly than the computerisation of MOT certification by Siemens for the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency. The system was introduced four years late in March and suffered numerous crashes before collapsing in April due to an "overrunning systems process" (Eye 1158). Garages had to revert to old-fashioned paper certificates while they waited for the computer system to catch up.

WHO WAS the Tory frontbencher derided as a "mince head" in a leaked memo from Desmond Swayne MP to David Cameron? According to the *Daily Mail* it was "an unnamed senior Tory spokesman on EU matters – possibly Mr Hague".

Not so. A hefty clue is given in the email's subject line – "Fish" – and the fact that Swayne does indeed write about fisheries policy before adding that "it does not help to have a mince head as the spokesman". Step forward Bill Wiggin, shadow Defra minister with special responsibility for fish.

Wiggin's only notable contribution since taking the job was to issue a bizarre press release in January blaming the death of the Thames whale on EU fishing policy. So Swayne's assessment may well be right.

BUSH – NEW MIDDLE EAST ROAD MAP



EDITORIAL
6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN.
Tel: 020 7437 4017. Fax: 020 7437 0705.
Email: strobes@private-eye.co.uk
Website: www.private-eye.co.uk

PRIVATE EYE SUBSCRIPTIONS/SALES
PO Box 326, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8FA.
Subscription enquiries: 0870 750 1714 or 01795 414 871
Overseas: +44 (0) 1795 414 870 Fax: 01795 414 555.
Web: www.private-eye.co.uk
Email: private-eye@dovetailservices.com

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
£24 per annum. Europe and Eire £32. Airmail (rest of world) £38. Cheques/POs to Private Eye. Mastercard/Visa.

ADVERTISING
Display: 020 7878 2303 Classified: 020 7240 9129

Published by Pressdram Ltd, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. **Printed** by BGP Ltd, Bicester OX6 7QZ. **Distributed** by P.E. Distributions, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. 020 7437 4017.

ABC

Street of Shame

ALTHOUGH good mates, one place Lord Levy and Tony Blair have not met in recent years is on either side of the tennis net, despite reports to the contrary. In fact Levy has had to seek other partners – like newspaper editors.

One might imagine that the *Sunday Times* editor John Witherow and the Lord Levy would be an unlikely tennis couple given the *Sunday Times*' attacks on Levy. But the world of politics and media doesn't work like that.

In fact Witherow played tennis with Levy at the fundraiser's palace in Totteridge just two days before his arrest. But if poor old Witherow thought he was going to get a scoop, he was in for a shock. In the first game he fell to the ground in acute pain with a broken Achilles tendon.

Witherow was happy to call a regular ambulance and go to a local NHS hospital. But Levy, in true New Labour style, called his personal surgeon and ensured that Witherow got the best private treatment. Who paid, we do not know; but Witherow is now hobbling around the *ST* office in a bright blue plaster cast.

JOHN PRESCOTT is not the only one to have benefited from Philip Anschutz's hospitality as he negotiated the development of the millennium dome.

As the *LA Times* noted in December last year, "the partners recently began offering junkets for the British media to tour Anschutz Entertainment Group properties in the US. To date, six journalists have received airfare and accommodations to see Elton John perform at the AEG-operated Colosseum at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas and attend a Green Day concert at Home Depot Center. Such arrangements are not uncommon in Britain. But for AEG, the media relations strategy appears to be paying off. In an Oct. 28 'exclusive' headlined 'The Dome of Rock 'n' Roll,' the *Daily Mirror* raved that the London venue was 'now poised for a remarkable transformation'."

Curiously, although then senior features writer Kevin O'Sullivan was happy to gush that Anschutz's "£500m plan looks a massive hit", he made no mention of his hospitality in either his piece on the dome, or the "exclusive from Las Vegas" interview with Elton John that he penned a fortnight previously.

WRITING in the *Independent on Sunday*, John Rentoul issued an emphatic correction to his lazier colleagues: Tony Blair "did not promise to be 'whiter than white', any more than David Cameron said 'hug a hoodie' – that was a *News of the World* sub-editor. Or Denis Healey said he would squeeze the rich until the pips squeaked (he said there would be "howls of anguish"). But Blair did say 'we must be purer than pure.'"

And so he did in July 1998. So how, in the past week alone, did 25 of Rentoul's Fleet Street colleagues (including, most spectacularly, Rentoul's sister paper the *Independent*, which splashed the phrase in vast type across its front page last Thursday) contrive to get the phrase wrong? Because they are relying on a different source – namely, one Piers Morgan, who wrote in his book of diaries *The Insider* that Blair had told him on 27 March 1997 that "I won't be weak on sleaze like the Tories. We have got to be whiter than white if we are to rebuild trust in government."

Still, that's a reliable source, isn't it? Er, no. Morgan also claimed that this conversation took place during "tea with Tony Blair at No 10" – more than a month before John Major moved out!

"IT LOOKED like the picture of a proud grandmother cradling her newborn grandson. But no – this 62-year-old woman was the new baby's mother. There can be few who saw this picture and read about the birth of this baby to Patricia Farrant and her 60-year-old husband, John, without feeling intensely queasy."

So began an invective by the *Daily Mail*'s Melanie Phillips against the woman who has just become Britain's oldest mother. But where did Melanie see these repellent pictures, and read that queasy-making account of the birth? What sick newspaper would celebrate the irresponsible behaviour of these two sexed-up sexagenarians?

Step forward the *Daily Mail*, which a mere two days earlier had paid the couple a six-figure sum in return for a sycophantic exclusive interview and lots of photos of the type which put poor Mel P off her breakfast.

IN HIS recent interview with *The Australian* (prop: R. Murdoch) the Dirty Digger warned Gordon Brown against calling a snap election if or when he succeeds Tony Blair.

"For no reason other than the dynamics of British politics," he said, "we would like to see at least a year to 18 months stand-off between Gordon Brown and David Cameron so we can decide which of those most coincides with our views. Those two are going to decide the next election and I think the British public would be cheated if they only got a month or two's warning."

Last Tuesday's *Times* devoted its main editorial to the same question – and, amazingly enough, came up with exactly the same answer. "His [Blair's] successor should resist the urge to call a snap election," it warned. "The electorate deserves at least a year to decide between him and the man from Notting Hill."

The electorate being, of course, Mr R. Murdoch.

I-SPY *Gloucester Road tube station*

Submitted by Paul Swain

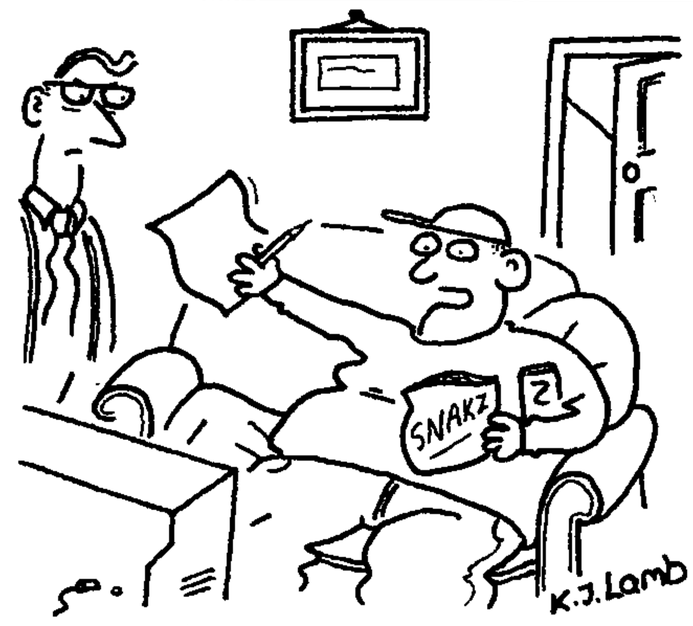
"PUBLICATION of a photograph of the dying Princess of Wales will trigger international revulsion," screeched the Mirror following the news that an obscure Italian magazine had printed a picture of Diana being attended to by a paramedic.

"No public good is served by the image, no new clue supplied to help us understand what happened that terrible night… only a voyeur without shame could enjoy looking at the grainy photograph." The whole of page nine of the same day's edition was filled with a full-length black-and-white photograph of the corpse of a young child killed by an Israeli air strike in Lebanon.

The *Sun*, meanwhile, was so disgusted at the "Diana Death Outrage" that it printed the picture on its front page – with most of the princess's head blocked out, though the accompanying article helpfully described how the "her head is to one side as a paramedic tries to fit an oxygen mask to her face. She is slumped in the back of the silver Mercedes in which she died...

"It came as a devastating blow to Princes William and Harry", the paper noted – not unlike the news that "a caddish TV cameraman" claimed to have had sex with Princess Diana for two-and-a-half minutes 20 years ago, which was splashed across the front page of the *Sun* two days previously, under the boastful strapline "Exclusive: Betrayal Will Cause More Hurt to Princes".

Just in case William and Harry did not find the double-page spread sufficiently upsetting, the paper devoted several hundred words and five mugshots to the "string of other men" their mother is alleged to have had affairs with while she was married to their father.



"Would you sponsor me? I'll be walking from the television to the fridge"

IT APPEARS that Lord Stevens may still have some work to do – the Daily Express spoke too soon, and the "Diana Death: Truth At Last" it exclusively revealed in May (see Eye 1158) has, shockingly, turned out to be nothing of the sort.

Last week the paper was forced to print the following apology: "Our 8 May 2006 report was meant to pose the question about whether the Princess's body had been embalmed in order to cover up a pregnancy. The Princess's body was indeed illegally embalmed in France immediately after the crash but it has yet to be established whether there was any cover up. We apologise for any misunderstanding that may have occurred. This was not intended."

Oh yeah? The full headline on Martin Evans' front-page splash: "Diana Death: Truth At Last – Princess's Body Was Illegally Embalmed To Cover Up Pregnancy."

"MIXED Wards: 12 Years of Shame" howled a double-page headline in the *Daily Mail* last Tuesday, deploring Tony Blair's failure to scrap mixed-sex wards in hospitals. An accompanying piece showed "how the *Mail* led the fight for dignity and respect" since starting a campaign on the issue in 1994.

The campaign was indeed launched 12 years ago, with another shock-horror double-page spread ("DEGRADATION THAT SHAMES THE NHS") and a photo of patients in a mixed ward. "It can come as something of a shock to patients, particularly women," the paper reported, "to find themselves lying in a ward next to someone of the opposite sex."

It can come as an even greater shock for patients to find themselves in the *Daily Mail* decades after they were in hospital. For as we revealed in December 1994 (*Eye* 861) the photo had actually been taken in 1966 at St Peter's Hospital, Chertsey – to go with a *Mail* story *praising* mixed wards.

As the 1966 headline implied ("In the hospital where togetherness is a tonic, the patients are feeling better already"), those patients were not in the least distressed to find themselves on a unisex ward. But the family of one old man in the photo was upset to see him being used again by the paper in 1994 for the opposite purpose – not least because he had died some years earlier.

Perhaps wisely, the faces in the picture used last week were blanked out to avoid any repeat of this embarrassing fiasco. Nor did the *Mail* confuse its readers by mentioning its own history of championing what it now calls "the wards of shame".

THE PAUL FOOT AWARD 2006

ARE you an investigative/campaigning journalist who's successfully got up the nose of officialdom or exposed an injustice? If so, you could be a contender for the Paul Foot Award 2006.

Private Eye and The Guardian have again joined forces to award a prize for investigative/campaigning journalism in memory of Footie. There is £5,000 for the outright winner and £1,000 each for five runners-up, all of whom will be honoured at a ceremony in central London on 16 October in front of jealous, embittered and no doubt drunken rival hacks.

The deadline for submissions is 1st September 2006. So if you can tear yourself away from doing your expenses, send us your best work now. It will have been written for a newspaper, magazine or website in the UK between 1st September 2005 and 31st August 2006 – and it will be the sort of journalism that would have made Paul smile and say: "We've got the bastards!"

For an application form and details on how to enter, go to www.private-eye.co.uk.

THE deputy editorship of the *Daily Telegraph* may now rest with two of Fleet Street's most insanely ambitious young thrusters -- Ian "Milky Bar Kid" MacGregor and *Wunderkind* Will Lewis – but has anything really changed on the old ship?

Lewis is overseeing the paper's move to Buckingham Palace Road, where he has already installed an elite team of two dozen "outriders" (known as BPRers) to experiment with such new-fangled contraptions as podcasts, tabloid dummies and "click 'n' carry" afternoon updates for commuters with computers.

Alas, the builders haven't moved out yet and are subjecting the BPRers to non-stop drilling and clouds of dust. "So tomorrow we are going to use the day to do things we need to do and are out of the office things," Lewis's secretary announced in an email at the end of last month.

Happily, despite the digital scratch 'n' sniff editions being planned at the paper's new home – traditional Fleet Street values endure. That BPR work schedule in full…

- 11am. Meet at Red Lion pub in Great Windmill St, Soho.
- 11.30am. Listen to a podcast being recorded for the *Telegraph* World Cup website.
- 12.30 Lunch at pub.
- 2pm. Visit British Library for exhibition of newspaper front pages.
- 4pm Head for main bar at the Thistle Hotel, Victoria, to watch football on big-screen telly.

"It's important that everyone shows up," Lewis's secretary adds, "as it is still a proper working day." Quite so.

HOW JOURNALISM WORKS

"We hug goodbye and it's a warm and proper hug where I tell him he's lovely and he squeezes me tighter."

Chrissy Iley…er…interviews Johnny Depp in the Guardian.

MAN IN THE EYE

MURDOCH MACLENNAN

IN 1986 the *Independent* launched itself with the slogan: "It is. Are You?" Twenty years on, hacks at the paper are asking the same question about their own chief executive, Ivan Fallon.

Last Tuesday, over breakfast with his counterpart at the *Telegraph* group, Murdoch MacLennan, he agreed that *Indie* media pundit Stephen Glover would never again be allowed to write anything about the *Telegraph*. Happily, Fallon has since come to his senses. But the incident highlights a problem that won't go away: the increasingly paranoid and menacing behaviour of the *Telegraph* boss, and his abuse of his own newspapers' editorial integrity.

If there were a category at the British Press Awards for the most touchy and vindictive man in Fleet Street, MacLennan would probably win it. He operates an "eye for an eye" policy, ringing up managerial bigwigs at other papers and threatening that unless editors agree to censor pieces about his company, they'll find a horse's head in their bed – or, rather, a series of damning articles about them in the *Telegraph*.

His particular gripe against the *Indie* is the waspish coverage of the *Torygraph* in Glover's media column. As long ago as 22 November last year, at a party in the National Portrait Gallery, MacLennan accosted *Indie* editor Simon Kelner and demanded he sack Glover. Kelner refused.

Last Monday, after further barbs from Glover, the retaliation began. A front-page story in the *Telegraph* business section – written on the orders of MacLennan himself – reported that the *Independent* was losing money. This was hardly news: everyone knows the *Indie* isn't profitable. The only new "fact" was a specific figure for the losses, £102m over the last eight years. But it transpired that the *Telegraph* had made this up.

On Tuesday the business section had another front-page story, accusing the *Indie* of inflating its circulation figures by including free copies and "export sales". Again, this wasn't news; but MacLennan forced the *Torygraph*'s business editor to print it.

That same morning, at his breakfast with Ivan Fallon, he arrived carrying a sheaf of Glover's cuttings, with offending passages marked. He warned that unless the *Indie* undertook to censor or suppress Glover, the *Telegraph* would unleash a third salvo in Wednesday's paper – this time attacking proprietor Tony O'Reilly himself. It's not clear what the *Telegraph* had on O'Reilly that was so damaging. But the threat worked: Fallon promised that Glover would be gagged.

Fallon, however, doesn't edit the *Independent*. The man who does, Simon Kelner, was understandably miffed to learn that a rival chief executive now assumed the right to dictate who should write columns and which subjects were off-limits. Realising that Kelner might resign in protest, Fallon backed down. He and Kelner have agreed that when Glover resumes his column next Monday he can reassure readers that he'll still write about the *Telegraph* whenever it seems worth a mention.

This will enrage MacLennan, who thinks he can blackmail other newspapers into accepting non-aggression pacts. He does have such an agreement with the *Daily Mail*, his former employer (as Paul Dacre has to remind Peter McKay whenever McHackey is tempted to tease the *Torygraph* or its owners in his Ephraim Hardcastle column). But his blustering attempts to extend it elsewhere have failed – until last week's lapse by Ivan Fallon.

Last December he rang senior *Guardian* executives to complain about an article in the media section which suggested that MacLennan's "lack of coherent vision" was creating "an atmosphere of mistrust and resentment" among *Telegraph* hacks. MacLennan warned of dire consequences unless editor Alan Rusbridger took a vow of *omerta*.

Rusbridger and his bosses stood firm. Sure enough, on 16 December the *Daily Telegraph* had a front-page business story headlined "*Guardian*'s Woes 'Down to Chiefs'", claiming that the paper was on the skids because of incompetent management. There was a further 1,000-word piece inside, reporting that the *Grauniad*'s "failed relaunch" had prompted "unease among senior editorial staff about the long-term financial health of the paper". Both stories were written at the behest of MacLennan, from whom Rusbridger has since received yet more threats.

Some *Telegraph* hacks object to their newspaper being hijacked by the chief executive to settle scores and bully rivals into silence. One reporter who was approached to write last week's anti-*Indie* stories refused to co-operate; luckily for MacLennan, business correspondent James Quinn proved more amenable.

MacLennan's old paper, the *Daily Mail*, has long operated a similar "eye for an eye" policy, but it's a new departure for the *Telegraph*. "It just shows," as one editor said last week, "that you can take the man out of the *Mail*, but you can't take the *Mail* out of the man."

FOOTBALL NEWS

IN HIS latest desperate attempt to divert attention from the Swiss police investigations into bribery and corruption at FIFA, president Sepp Blatter is trumpeting a renewed fight against the racism that he calls "the devil in our sport".

Despite his new-found rage against racism, Blatter remains close to two friends, both members of his 24-strong executive committee, whose public utterances have themselves brought accusations of racism.

Finance committee Senior Vice President Julio Grondona, known as "The Godfather" in his native Argentina where he has ruled football for almost three decades, was asked during a 2003 TV interview why there were no Jewish referees in the Argentine football First Division. He replied: "I don't believe a Jew can ever be a referee at that level because it's hard work and, you know, Jews don't like hard work."

Accused of racism and stung by calls by Jewish groups for his prosecution under anti-discrimination laws, Grondona was forced to make a public apology and now makes appropriate noises on behalf of Israel for the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

Another Blatter stalwart, FIFA Vice President Austin Jack Warner, recently embarrassed fellow Trinidadians by launching a typically intemperate attack on British hack Andrew Jennings, in which he remarked: "Massa day done; Massa day come back!!!" – suggesting that Jennings's criticisms of Warner equated somehow to the return of slavery!

Last May, when Jennings turned up with a BBC Panorama TV crew to ask Warner about profiteering from the World Cup and vote-rigging in FIFA elections, Warner suggested the ageing hack "go fuck" himself, then told a political rally in his home town of Rio Clara: "No foreigner, particularly a white foreigner will come to my country and harass me, intimidate me and push me around."

Blackbeard was mortified to discover that his new parrot was a bit middle class

THE Labour party's fightback against the cash-for-honours scandal came on the morning after Lord Levy's arrest, with a full-page advert in the *Times* signed by such fine and upstanding luminaries as Eddie Izzard, Alex Ferguson, Patrick Stewart and, er, Nicky Gavron, proclaiming that "we believe in a Britain where enterprise and aspiration are combined with fairness and social justice... that's why we're proud to help fund the Labour party."

Top of the list was Simon Woodroffe, founder of the Yo! Sushi chain and a bona fide celeb thanks to his appearances on BBC2's *Dragon's Den.* Radio Five Live tracked him down that afternoon to talk about the advert.

Peter Allen (*presenter*): What was the point of doing it today? Was it deliberately chosen?

Woodroffe: I don't know, I never heard that.

PA: Leaving aside the timing, you give money to the party, do you?

SW: I've never given any money to the party. I have it in my mind to do that, I haven't as yet.

PA: Are you going to?

SW: You know, as time unfolds, all will become clear.

PA: Awaiting the right offer, are you?

SW: No, they gave me an OBE in the last Queen's honours list. There was no negotiation involved, ha ha!

...**PA**: I'm interested to know you haven't made one, because the press office of the Labour party seems to think you've given them a thousand quid. You really haven't given them anything at all?

SW: As yet, no.

With PR as brilliant as that, the scandal is bound to be forgotten in no time!

Then there's Ann Limb – listed as vice president of IT consultancy "gov3". Ms Limb's contribution to enterprise was as chief executive of Ufi, the company running the government's LearnDirect scheme. LearnDirect was supposed to be self-funding by selling courses to businesses, but by July last year it had recovered only £12m of commercial income while getting £930m in public funding.

ASSOCIATE editor Paul Vallely made a savage attack on British charities in a high profile piece in the *Independent* this month.

He slammed ActionAid, Christian Aid, War On Want and the World Development Movement for not recognising "Tony Blair's large-scale adoption" of an idealist aid agenda. Instead of praising Blair's G8 Gleneagles success, these charities were resorting to "dodgy assumptions", "selective distortions or a "cheap-shot 'down with fat cats' tone" to complain about aid and trade systems.

Vallely also worried that formerly "sound and useful" organisations like Oxfam, Cafod and Save the Children also "succumb to peer pressure from other agencies to exaggerate" on development issue.

While the government is clearly sensitive about attacks on its Gleneagles performance, seeing its aid agenda as an important counterbalance to political setbacks over Iraq, and Sir Bob Geldof has also been hurt by criticism of his role at Gleneagles, Vallely himself may share these feelings. He is not only co-author of the report by Blair's Commission for Africa, but he was also awarded a CMG in the last Queen's birthday honours list. He was also co-author of the "official Live 8" book and co-author of Geldof's autobiography too. Curiously he did not acknowledge these interests in his *Independent* piece.

CALLED TO ORDURE

ONCE a year Parliament's Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) publishes a report on MI5, MI6 & Co. Once a year MPs debate that report in the Commons. Once a year they do their best not to rock the canoe. But this year there was an exception.

Andrew Mackinlay, Labour MP for Thurrock, started to ask tricky questions. Deputy Speaker Sylvia Heal panicked and tried to close him down. She was not entirely successful. It was all great fun to watch – even if we still didn't learn that much.

Mackinlay is one of the House's most peppery loners. A mixture of Cockney left and indignant patriot, he has long been suspicious of the spooks and their snooty pals in the Westminster hierarchy. They seem just as wary of him.

So angry and nervous that he was shaking, Mackinlay claimed he was the victim of defamation by shadowy elements in the Foreign Office. He also suggested that he is snooped on by the men in raincoats, despite the "Wilson doctrine" that MPs' telephones are not tapped. Mackinlay pointed out that the Wilson doctrine only applies to "old-fashioned landline telephones". It may not prevent spies eavesdropping on MPs' mobiles and on their computer communications. "I am not making this up," asserted a furious Mackinlay, pointing out that he knew from personal experience that intelligence on elected Members was being collected.

By 11am last Tuesday few MPs had been given a copy of the ISC report they were meant to start debating seven hours later. Mackinlay was outraged that backbenchers were being given so little time to read the report. He told Home Secretary John Reid that it was "a thundering disgrace" and that "smoke and mirrors" were being used. Reid claimed to be "deeply disappointed" by the news. His body language, however, suggested he couldn't give a toss. Ministers hate awkward customers like Mackinlay.

The ISC is not, strictly, a committee of parliament. It is organised by the Cabinet Office and its members (although they are all parliamentarians) are chosen by the prime minister. This may sound a nice distinction, but it gives Downing Street the ability to stop any "dangerous" maverick getting on to the committee. Can't have mavericks in the spy world, can we?

Mackinlay thinks this stinks. Having pointed out that the ISC "let us down" at the time of the Hutton and Butler inquiries, he argued that it was hard for outspoken MPs to get on to the committee. The bent selection process for the committee was "flawed and unparliamentary".

Speaking without notes, he said he recently discovered that the Government was keeping files on him. These included a "highly defamatory remark" (he wouldn't say what it was, alas). It was now that Heal first interrupted Mackinlay. He ignored her. When Heal later tried again to break his unscripted flow Mackinlay said he was "astounded" by her behaviour and was being "prevented from explaining how I think our present system is flawed". It is almost unknown for MPs to be so rude to the chair. Heal backed off.

So if people such as Mackinlay can't get on the ISC, who can? The committee is chaired by former Northern Ireland Secretary Paul Murphy, as bland a pudding as ever reached Cabinet. His sidekicks include the likes of Michael Ancram and Alan Beith, two steady-as-she-goes grandees. Add one Labour loyalist (George Howarth), one ridiculous Tory puffball (Michael Mates), plus a thick-as-champ backbencher, Dari Taylor, and you have the measure of parliament's microscope on the secret world.

Does it matter? Well, put it like this. If the ISC had been better established as a bold and truly independent body, people like David Kelly might have had somewhere to take their doubts about Alastair Campbell's dossiers – and we might never have got involved in the Iraq War.

'Gavel Basher'

O·B·N

I was pondering what [Tony Blair] might do when he finally leaves Downing Street. He is still young, has a global profile and largely positive reputation, phenomenal drive, toughness and energy, and great people skills. There are lots of things he can and will do.

But I wonder if he couldn't be persuaded that leading the fight to stage the World Cup at home might be one of them. And if he's looking for help on the strategy and media side of things, I might find time to help. Winning three elections was one thing. Winning the World Cup could be even better.

ALASTAIR CAMPBELL
Times

Submitted by Mark Leech

£10 paid for entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

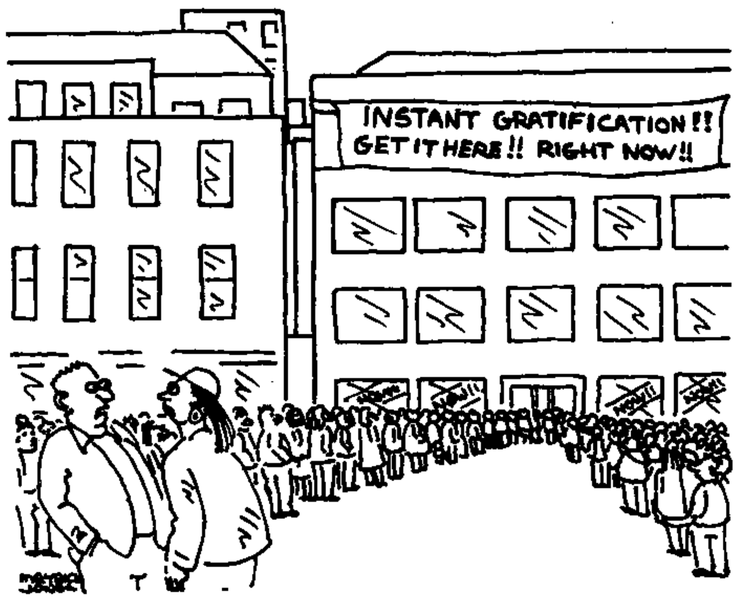
PREPARING for mobilisation in Afghanistan, TA Royal Engineer Officer and Conservative MP for Milton Keynes north east Mark Lancaster was surprised to see one of the items on his kit list.

As well as his other desert camouflage kit, he is required to show up with "3 T-shirts Des Brown". Surely the new defence minister is taking the cult of personality too far?

SECURITY NEWS

A NUMBER of clapped-out Tories are finding homes courtesy of the burgeoning new private "security" firms.

For example Malcolm Rifkind MP, rejected by David Cameron for a frontbench job, now chairs Armor Group which supplies armed guards to the Foreign Office in Iraq. Michael Howard, rejected by the electorate, was taken on as chairman by Diligence, a firm set up by former MI5 and CIA agents which also sends armed guards to Iraq. And Nicholas Soames MP, who resigned his command as Shadow Defence Minister, now has a seat on the board of Aegis, Tim Spicer's firm that is currently minting it in Iraq.



"No. Look at the queues... we'd be ages"

THE FILTH ESTATE

AFTER much pressure, Downing Street has at last released details of Tony Blair's cosy chats with press barons Richard Desmond and Rupert Murdoch.

It admits that Blair spoke to the Dirty Digger by phone on 13 March 2003 and with Dirty Des on 29 January 2003 and 23 February the following year. Other conversations may have taken place but No 10 refuses to disclose them because they were "not clearly of an official nature".

And what were the consequences of the "official" discussions? By a remarkable coincidence, on the very day after Blair spoke to Dirty Des in January 2003, the *Express* ran a leader backing the PM to the hilt over the impending attack on Iraq. "Prime minister Tony Blair has called for a united front against Saddam Hussein," it thundered. "The Iraqi tyrant cannot be allowed to suspect we are not fully committed to war and must be left in no doubt that military action will be the result of his non-cooperation."

In return, as the same issue of the *Express* revealed, Desmond got a great boost for his virulent campaign against anti-asylum seekers. Under the headline "I'll Slash Asylum Numbers Vows PM", an anonymous report quoted a "Whitehall source" as saying that "Blair was 'acutely aware' that his government had not got to grips with the problem and did not dispute the right of newspapers such as the *Daily Express* to campaign on the issue." It added that Blair was at last heeding the *Express*'s advice: more "Whitehall sources" confirmed that he was aiming for "a cut of at least 30,000 per year in asylum applications".

It is less obvious what Blair wanted out of their second meeting; perhaps this time Desmond was the supplicant. Following Conrad Black's downfall, the *Telegraph* titles were on the market and Desmond had declared his interest. Four years earlier, he simply handed over £100,000 to the Labour Party and a week later had his application to buy the *Express* titles waved through by the DTI. If his *Telegraph* bid had succeeded, however, the government might have been obliged to give serious consideration to whether it was "in the public interest" for the seedy porn baron to take over yet more national newspapers.

And what of Blair's conversation with the Dirty Digger in March 2003? The Commons had just passed the Communications Bill, which would have allowed newspaper proprietors like Murdoch to buy a stake in Channel 5. It was expected to meet fierce resistance in the House of Lords, where Lord Puttnam was leading the charge against liberalisation. The government did eventually agree that Ofcom would have to run the rule over any Murdoch bid for the channel, but declined Puttnam's demand for a public service "plurality test".

Another topic of discussion was undoubtedly the imminent attack on Iraq. With British tanks about to roll in, a *Times* leader the next day parroted the Downing Street line: "The prospects for a peaceful solution to the crisis have been comprehensively undermined by French intransigence and Saddam Hussein's belligerence." This was echoed in the *Sun*, which declared that "only Jacques Chirac's arrogance, stupidity and personal vanity are to blame for bringing us to the brink of a terrible war with Iraq".

In a recent *Guardian* column, former No 10 spin doctor Lance Price wrote that he never met Rupert Murdoch "but at times when I worked at Downing Street he seemed like the 24th member of the cabinet". Dirty Des isn't quite in the same league, of course; but he probably still qualifies as a junior minister.

Down on the Farm

ONE of the delights of the European system of lawmaking is the opportunity it gives to clever operators to bend it to their own advantage.

The name of the game is to ensure that laws are passed which ensure that your own product becomes the Europe-wide standard, while the products of your competitors are banned. And no one is cleverer at manipulating the system than the French, as has recently been demonstrated yet again by Lacme, France's leading manufacturer of electric fencing for use by farmers.

Electric fence energisers, the devices that control how much current goes into the wire, are currently subject to a worldwide standard, laid down by a body known as the International Electrotechnical Commission. Around the world, most countries adopt this standard for their own use. But over the past two years, in league with a German fence producer, Horizont, Lacme has been lobbying hard to have the worldwide standard changed. Inevitably in the name of safety, the French have been pressing for the maximum permissible power output of fencing to be drastically reduced, to a mere five joules.

The IEC was not impressed. Its members concluded that there was no problem with the safety of the existing standard. In Germany, for instance, they were told that over the past 10 years, only two fatalities have resulted from contact with electric fencing, in each case involving victims who committed the fatal mistake, while drunk, of urinating on a live fence.

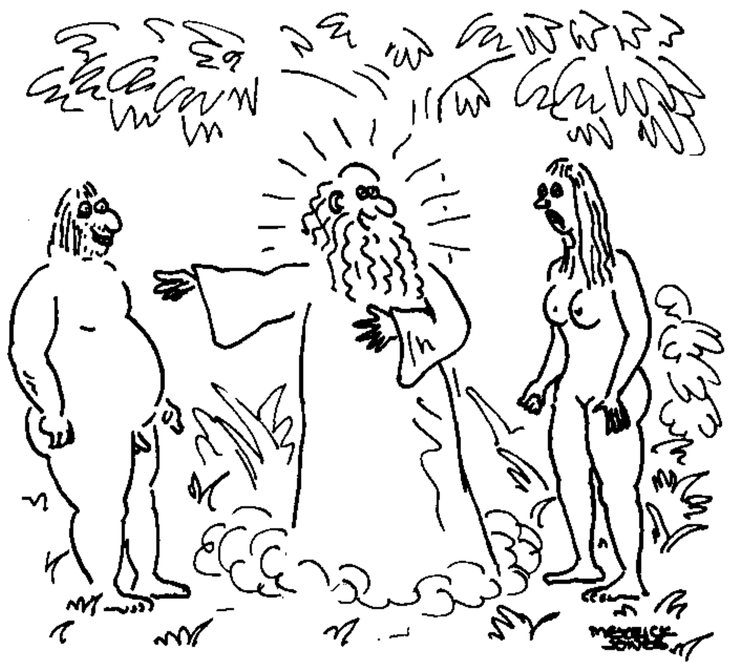
Every year millions of people come into contact with high-powered fences without sustaining any more serious damage than a nasty jolt. To farmers these fences are an invaluable way to prevent their animals wandering on to roads (again in Germany, in 2002 alone, nine deaths and 308 serious injuries resulted from road accidents caused by straying animals). Reducing the current level would make fencing much less effective.

The IEC therefore chucked out the French proposal, suspecting that its only real motive was to give Lacme a commercial advantage over its competitors, since farmers would have to pay large sums to buy new equipment which only Lacme and its German ally can at present supply.

Thwarted in their bid to get a new world standard, the French instead lobbied hard in Cenelec, the European electrical standards body, for their limit to be adopted just in Europe. Several countries, including the UK, Ireland and Switzerland, strongly opposed this on the grounds that it would drastically reduce the effectiveness of farm fencing. By skilful operating behind-the-scenes, however, the French won enough support in the relevant committee, from 13 countries including Germany, for their proposal to win the day. If this is confirmed at a meeting of Cenelec's main technical board in September, all European countries will be forced to accept the new French limit.

What has enraged Europe's farming organisations is that no one on Cenelec ever thought it relevant to consult them on the damage this will do to their members. Almost all farmers will have to buy new equipment and wiring, at a price as much as four times that of their existing systems, for fencing which will be much less effective. They foresee a sharp rise in accidents and litigation, and warn that it will become much harder to control animal movements in the event of future disease outbreaks. But at least Lacme foresees a sharp rise in nothing more than its profits.

'Muckspreader'



"Here's one I made earlier"

BLACKWATCH

IS Lord Black of Toad Hall skint or loaded? His lawyer Ed Genson gave a heart-tugging reply to a federal judge in Chicago last week: "He does not have any liquidity."

But Judge Amy St Eve was unmoved by this sob-story. She had summoned Genson to explain the gaps and omissions in a financial affidavit signed last November, on which Conrad Black's bail terms were based (see last *Eye*). Genson duly produced a new "accounting statement" – showing that Black's monthly outgoings on his Toronto house alone come to $200,000, including $114,000 for the mortgage and a generous $9,000 for his gardener. And that doesn't include the bills for his Florida mansion: only three months ago Black wrote a cheque for $460,279 to the Palm Beach tax collector.

Surprising lavishness for someone who claimed last November to have less than $300,000 and now says he has no liquid assets at all. As Judge St Eve wondered: "Where's that coming from? How is he paying such monthly expenses?" Ed Genson has until this Friday to come up with a plausible answer. The court will then hold another bail hearing on 2 August.

Another puzzling feature of Black's latest statement is its revelation that that the old rogue has been "borrowing" large sums from his fragrant wife, Barbara Amiel. "Funds seem to flow in odd directions between Mr Black and Mrs Black," the district attorney told St Eve. "We'd like a better idea of Mrs Black's assets." But the judge refused to order an audit of Barbara's assets, perhaps realising what a Herculean task it would be. Simply cataloguing the contents of the shoe-cupboard might take a year or more.

Conrad and Barbara rejoice in luxury – a point confirmed most eloquently in new evidence from a separate lawsuit between Hollinger Inc and Hollinger International. The first company claims that it was "methodically sucked dry" by the latter as Black stripped out its newspaper assets (including the *Daily Telegraph*) at below-market prices. According to documents filed with an Illinois district court last week, "Black outlined this fraud in a series of writings and 'musings'" – in one of which he described it as "the crowning moment of maximum self-enrichment, the Holy Grail toward which we have been toiling for many years". Poop poop!

CADBURY'S FLAKEY

FINDINGS by the Food Standards Authority that Cadbury's safety procedures were inadequate and outdated, leading to salmonella contamination in its chocolate, will be particularly embarrassing for the company's chief executive Sir John Sunderland (knighted last month for services to obesity: see *Eye* 1161).

Sunderland is a serial anti-regulation campaigner who has often bemoaned how hard food companies have it from the regulators. Not long ago he declared that: "The many headed hydra of regulation is alive and well. We need to deal with this monster before it causes serious damage." Unlike salmonella outbreaks, obviously – which his firm failed to report to the authorities, as required by law, for a full five months.

A prosecution for failing to report contamination seems on the cards, the maximum penalty for which is two years' imprisonment. Of course there's no chance Cadbury's top man will face this sanction: he'll remain at liberty to carry on campaigning for business to be spared the annoyance of regulation…

FTVE

BBC Annual Report

THE BBC's agreement to pay Jonathan Ross £6m a year at a time of financial tightening for those staff who have kept their jobs seemed at the time a disastrous piece of media-management. But it's now clear that it was actually quite clever. The board of management needed a gigantic salary out there in the hope of making their own massive inflation-busting rises look relatively modest when they were revealed in the annual report.

The reason the plan hasn't quite worked is that Ross is at least a freelance who has shown the ability to earn money in the commercial sector. It's harder to sympathise with a scheme to tie to the BBC a group of corporation lifers who, in any case, were only ever going to leave when their huge pension pots boiled. And DG Thompson and Chairman Grade haven't helped by making a public case for the executive pay structure which contains a series of illogical propositions

Number one is that the wages and perks need to be so high because otherwise it would be impossible to compete with commercial broadcasting to attract the best personnel. But every single member of the top-whack club was attracted to the BBC for pin-money when young. Admittedly, both Thompson and director of telly Jana Bennett briefly left to work in commerce but soon came back for income substantially lower than what they're getting now

As it happens, the last three very senior people lured to the BBC from the private sector were John Birt, John Willis and Peter Fincham. Of these, the first became the BBC director-general most universally detested by his staff; Willis has just resigned as director of Factual and Learning because he was sick of spending time sacking people; and Fincham remains as controller of BBC1 but was so rich from running the indie Talkback when he arrived that money can have played no part in securing his employment. None of these makes a strong argument for the power of big wages in recruitment

Don't give up on this one yet, though. Thompson and Grade also play a variation on number one, which is that the stratospheric recompense is important to stop the board of management from being poached by rivals. The press and the Commons select committee have been too soft on this one, simply expressing doubt. Is it, in the end, likely, for example, that BBC lifer Mark Byford would actually be offered half a million quid a year plus final-salary pension by ITV? Has "media and legal" director Caroline Thompson had to beat away regular entreaties from a City legal behemoth like Slaughter & May?

In order to reassure doubters about the need for the corporation's golden handcuffs policy, surely what we need is a policy borrowed from football in which the BBC has to make public all approaches for its top players and whether or not they were minded to accept.

So, just as Sir Alex Ferguson will mutter to MUTV, "Spaniards are in for Cristiano Ronaldo, but he's no gonna go", so Thommo could appear on the BBC internal ring-main and insist: "Capital Radio have said they'll match Abramsky's three million pension pot but she's staying with us for a bigger bonus. NBC in the States have come in this morning with four hundred grand for Byford so it's a damn good thing we give him such a wedge."

But the claim that a strong sterling cage needs to be built around the BBC's main players is not the only illogicality from the BBC's top two. They've also argued that the reason salaries have risen so dramatically in the recent round is that bonuses have been cut. But, given that the only reason for cutting the bonuses would be that their payment could not be justified, what justification can there be for making up the money anyway?

In the same way, the bosses have said that most people are happy to work for the BBC for lower than the commercial rate. But, if that's true, what possible reason is there for then making up the salaries to commercial rates as a kind of reward? It's like telling a kid that, because they've been so good in promising to give up sweets for Lent, they can eat sweets during Lent anyway.

What has mystified everyone is the sheer stupidity of the BBC's top ten lining their pockets so openly at a time when thousands of staff are being sacked and budgets cut. You might think the director of media and legal could have earned some of her whack by pointing out that this was a PR disaster in the offing.

What's happened, though, is that the boys have been caught out in their timing. According to the timetable agreed with the government two years ago, everyone assumed that the next charter and licence fee agreement would have been agreed by spring 2006 at the latest.

That's why, on the assumption that another decade of doing whatever it wanted was beginning, the Beeb cheerfully filled the summer peak-time on BBC1 with probably the most witless series ever made – the reality show-jumping contest *Only Fools On Horses* – and also shovelled cash towards the board in this year's pay settlements. Unfortunately, Culture Secretary Jowell called the BBC's bluff by delaying the decision and so Tommo and Grade now face the nightmare of steering through the settlement with their staff on strike and broadsheet editorials calling for an external remuneration board to decide the fees of directors.

In this terrible mess, the only clear winner is Jonathan Ross. According to the logic so far applied to these problems, the obvious solution is to jack up his wage-packet even more to have another go at making the board's look small by comparison.

'Remote Controller'

MEDIA NEWS

A DOUBLE whammy for *Sky News* in its sensitive and respectful coverage of the 7/7 commemorations in London.

Not only did the wreath-laying in Tavistock Square, site of the fourth bomb on the number 30 bus, take place to the incessant background noise of the channel's helicopter hovering overhead, but a piece to camera by political correspondent Peter Spencer was interrupted by his mobile phone gong off – playing the ringtone "Barbie Girl" by Aqua.

THE death of a soldier in a firefight in Garmat Ali, just north of Basra, brings the total number of British dead in Iraq to 114.

Meanwhile at the BBC, the producers of the motoring show *Top Gear* are in touch with hostile environment/safety advisers to assess the feasibility of a brilliant new idea: to race a clutch of 4x4s all the way from Kuwait to Basra.

"BEN, just before you go..." asks Peter Sissons on *BBC News 24* at the end of an interview with Ben Brown in Beirut, thus giving the impression that the piece is live.

Sissons asks a follow-up question and the camera switches back to Brown, who is, alas, now in a totally different location from the one he was a second before.

Either Brown has been using Dr Who's Tardis... or News 24 producers are again fobbing off viewers with pre-recorded packages masquerading as live items.

IT IS just three short years since the BBC lured television executive John Willis back across the Atlantic with the offer of a £300,000-a-year post as head of its factual programme-making department. To ease the hardship, it handed over another £72,000 of licence fee payers' money to help Willis with the cost of moving back home to Britain.

Now Willis – who is nearing retirement age – is quitting the Beeb for a lucrative position in the thriving independent production sector. But is he offering to repay any of the relocation money? Perish the thought.

DAVID Aaronovitch unleashed a ferocious attack on the BBC after John Humphrys had the impudence to ask John Prescott about his sex life. "If news programmes are going to become glorified scandal sheets," he informed *Times* readers, "I don't want to pay for it any more than I want to pay for the *Daily Mail*."

How different from the David Aaronovitch who interviewed Simon Hughes MP for the *Times* in January, and asked him twice whether he would ever marry a man. Aaronovitch conceded at the time that this might sound "surreal and impertinent", but felt it was necessary to clear up the various rumours about Hughes's sexual history. Other questions included: "So no skeletons in your cupboard, then?... So, Simon Hughes, are we entitled to ask whether you have ever used prostitutes?... So you haven't paid for sex?... Is there a Mr or Mrs Simon Hughes at the minute?"

John Humphrys could hardly have put it better himself.

IN THE biggest hissy-fit provoked by a *Newsnight* report since Matthew Parris outed Peter Mandelson, the World Cup film in which a reporter drove a car decorated with England flags round various parts of Scotland to gauge anti-English sentiment is currently the subject of 24 viewer complaints, an investigation into possible incitement to racial hatred by Strathclyde police and an early-day motion by Scottish Nationalist MP Pete Wishart decrying it as an "act of entrapment in its endeavour to besmirch and tarnish the reputation of Scottish sports fans".

Curiously, none of these parties expressed any displeasure last month when Edinburgh-based paper *Scotland On Sunday* had the wizard idea of investigating anti-English sentiment by... sending out a team of reporters in cars decorated with England flags round various parts of Scotland!

Number crunchings

2 ■ Hours of children's programming per week on ITV if Ofcom pass its request for a reduction

6 ■ Hours of Love Island on ITV this week

24 ■ Hours of Quizmania and The Mint on ITV this week

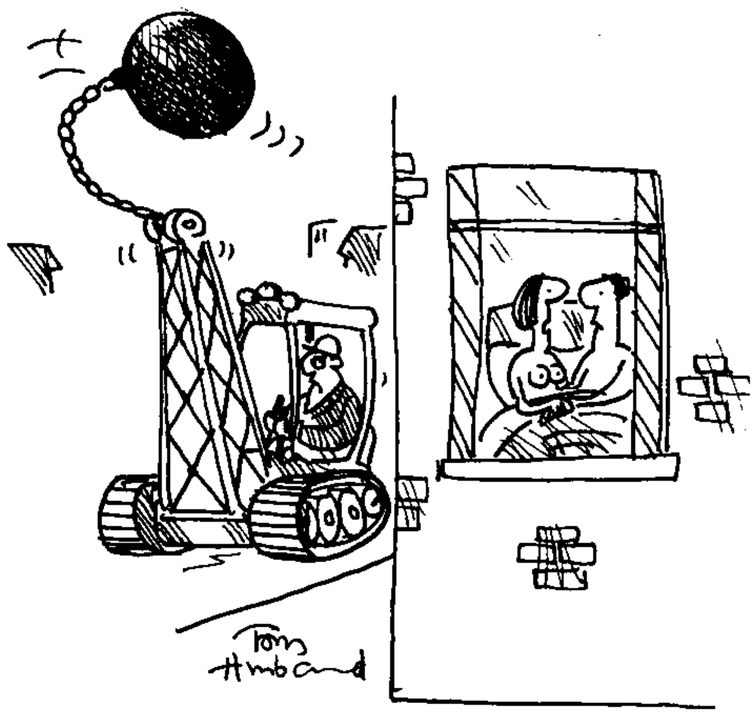
DUMB BRITAIN

The Weakest Link, BBC2

Anne Robinson: What force of nature is responsible for keeping the Earth, planets and asteroids in orbit around the Sun?
Contestant *(winner of the show)*: Delta Force.

BBC Radio Leeds
Graham Liver: Which piece of essential household equipment was invented by Thomas Crapper?
Contestant: Er...
Liver: The clue's in the question. Thomas Crapper.
Contestant: The tin opener?

BBC Radio WM
Danny Kelly: Where is the auditory canal?
Caller: Is it Manchester?



"We'll have to be careful... my husband's working on a demolition site round the corner"

DRAMATIC MUSE

FOR 13 years the volunteers of the Titchfield Abbey Association (TAA) looked after the ruins of the Hampshire abbey, rumoured to have connections with Shakespeare, on behalf of English Heritage.

For the past several years, each summer its sister group the Titchfield Festival Theatre (TFT) has put on outdoor Shakespeare plays in the grounds, attracting thousands of people and school groups.

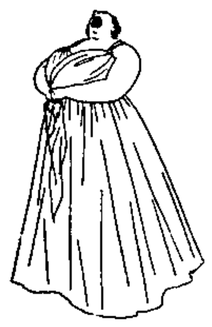
But this year English Heritage decided to take over running the site directly, "sacked" the volunteers and rewarded their years of working to put the abbey on the map by... trying to bill the thespians £26,000 to perform in the abbey!

Although the site is unstaffed with free access during the daytime, English Heritage says it will have to have two of its staff present during any evening performances in order to ensure compliance with the new licensing and safety laws and therefore have to charge to cover staffing as well as administration, training and legal costs. It says it is making no profit out of the deal.

This costs a staggering £450 per night, which mounts up considerably over a summer run. TFT is a non-profit organisation, with casts combining local amateur talent with professional actors. Former TAA site manager Ken Groves, who also helps organise TFT, said it cannot afford £26,000 and has been unable to find another place to perform this year, so has been forced to cancel the entire season.

English Heritage is clearly not entirely opposed to theatre being performed at the abbey, however – it is currently advertising tickets for a professional travelling production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* there during the summer. It, presumably, can afford the bill.

MUSIC & MUSICIANS



ARE the genteel residents of north London who have had it up to here with the noise pumped out every weekend by the open-air concerts on the lake at Kenwood House about to "do a Garsington" and get militant?

Anger is certainly mounting over the behaviour of IMG, the concerts' promoter, and the hyper-efficiency of its speaker system which blast Hampstead Heath and surrounding streets for 10 weekends every summer.

As well as managing artists, IMG also runs events: invariably on a large-scale like the crossover concerts (Art Garfunkel to Bryn Terfel) that take place by Kenwood's pretty lake. When locals complain – and not simply because the programme includes artistes like Russell Watson – does IMG take the complaints seriously? No. It dismisses them out of hand as nimby-ism – not dwelling on the fact that they are also an attempt to stifle IMG's fat profits.

IMG likes to position itself as a public benefactor, bringing pleasure to the masses. And earlier this year, when Camden Council stepped in to resolve the matter, IMG fought it through the courts: a long and expensive battle that finally forced the company to compromise, begrudgingly reducing its 2006 season from 10 concerts to 8.

But IMG is still in belligerent mood, say locals. It has built a new stage that floats on pontoons on the middle of the lake and is, by general consent, an awful eyesore in such a picturesque setting. Worse, it was put up without planning consent; and when IMG did finally file its application on 20 June, it was just four days before the concert season began.

This stymied Camden Council who knew that if it took IMG to court again there would be another drawn-out battle; IMG would appeal; and by the time the court finally ruled, the Kenwood season would have been and gone, leaving Camden with an empty victory. So Camden has done nothing this time, and the music giant has had its way regardless of the law.

But it isn't over, as they say, *until the fat lady sings*, and various Kenwood locals have been muttering about taking matters into their own hands. They've been looking into what happened when the disgruntled neighbours of Garsington Opera in Oxfordshire (similarly open-air but generating nothing like the noise of Kenwood) got militant and sabotaged the opening night with noise of their own: hedge-strimmers, car alarms, light aircraft, that sort of thing.

Whether that would drown out the speaker system remains to be seen. But there are even mutterings that floating stages have been known to sink. Yes... it's war all right.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

AD NAUSEAM

COULD the Curse of the World Cup Cash-In (see Ad Nauseam *ad nauseam*) now be spreading to cricket?

Sky's "Engxiand" campaign for its summer of coverage consisted of huge photos of Andrew Flintoff in full flight – the one performer, Sky would have assumed, who would always make the team. Flintoff then succumbed to an ankle injury, missed the Sri Lanka one-day series and will sit out the first test against Pakistan.

Sky quickly substituted one blustering blond for another and went for bowler Matthew Hoggard, the reliable stalwart of the last 32 test matches. But wait! Just days after the posters went up the curse struck again and Hoggard had to have six stitches in his hand after a Yorkshire colleague trod on it during a warm-up.

RYANAIR and Easyjet's advertising is nearly always a contender for Ad Nauseam's coveted Most Nauseating Ad award, generally on grounds of bad taste or sheer tackiness. Ryanair's latest press work shows it hasn't lost its touch.

It exhorts punters to "Avoid Queues. Use Ryanair Web Check-In" above a picture of an endless queue that looks well worth avoiding. Not only is this the kind of clunky literal that gives advertising a bad name, but the set-up also looks eerily familiar. That's because Ryanair has been clever enough to copy one of the most famous adverts of all time, Saatchi & Saatchi's 1979 "Labour Isn't Working". If one was feeling generous this could be construed as an ironic *homage* from one set of advertisers to another. Until, that is, you realise the picture of the queue is the very same one used in Labour Isn't Working – Ryanair's "idea" was to scan it, flip it and Photoshop it.

THIS month sees the launch of Coca-Cola's new concoction, Coke Zero, with all the cross-media marketing splurge you'd expect from the brand who invented the reinvention game.

On the back of the snafus that accompanied the launch of New Coke in 1985 (which everyone hated) and its spring water Dasani two years ago (which turned out to be gently carcinogenic tap water), you'd have thought Coke would want anything but controversy with its latest, multi-million pound launch.

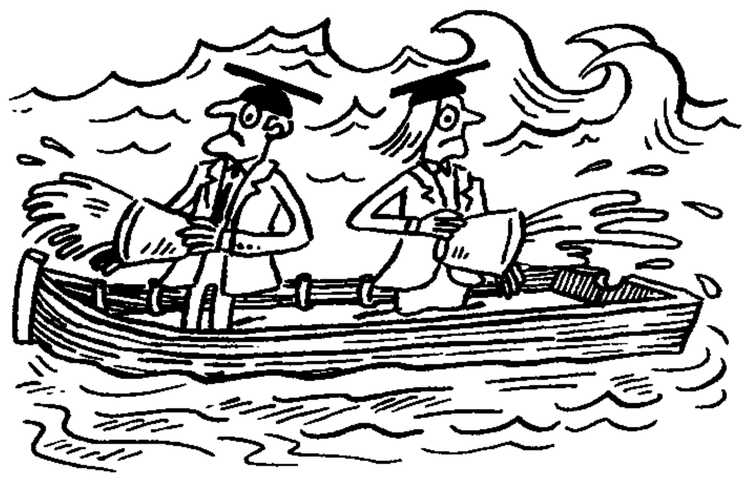
Which is why Coke Zero's packaging is somewhat surprising – it features what look like collapsing towers set against a black, apocalyptic background, and all of these next to the word Zero.

Coke has often been accused of being tasteless... but rarely in this sense.

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

EDUCASHUN NEWZ



THERE was scarcely a dry eye in the sports hall when Trinny "*What not to wear*" Woodall gave the guest of honour's speech at her alma mater, Bedgebury School, on 7 July. The tears weren't for her shock confession of a drug-addicted past – but because five hours later the school would shut its doors for ever.

Exactly six weeks earlier Bedgebury's chairman of governors Andrew Fellows had written to parents out of the blue with the shock announcement of the imminent closure of this 80-year-old day/boarding girls' school set in 200 acres of Kentish parkland. But parents were only given an opportunity to question Fellows and his fellow governors about the closure on the very last day itself. Asked why parental letters demanding an explanation had been ignored, Fellows just shrugged; and senior governor and former bursar Ray Sinclair-Smith riposted: "I stopped opening letters from parents, because I didn't like their abusive tone."

"We may have a moral obligation to the children, but as an educational charity, our first duty is to the charity," Fellows told astonished parents. "We have no duty of care to the children. We do not even have a legal obligation to provide education."

Although the previous year's accounts had shown a healthy surplus of £250,000, parents were told that Bedgebury was being forced to shut its doors because of falling numbers – a "predicted shortfall" of between 15 and 27 pupils, out of an original total of 340. As one businessman parent put it: "What company would decide to cease trading after a drop in turnover of less than 10 percent?"

"I have done everything in my power to keep this school open," insisted Fellows, pointing to an "expensive" marketing campaign here and overseas. Where exactly? In the UK, Bedgebury had "targeted", er, Ashford.

In fact there had been rumours that the headmistress, Mrs Hilary Moriarty, had restricted her recruiting drive to only the brightest pupils. If true, that was strange, as Bedgebury's whole reputation was founded on its ability to turn less able girls into high achievers.

Abroad, Moriarty had also touted for super-bright girls from Japan and Hong Kong – though it was decided apparently to limit numbers. As one governor's wife heatedly explained in the closure meeting: "You parents wouldn't have wanted a load of foreigners in the school, would you?"

Back in June, soon after the school closure was announced, suspicious parents had asked the Charity Commission to investigate. Among the questions parents posed were: was there a hidden agenda behind the school's precipitate closure? Why were the school's bankers given a valuation of just £5m for a grade 2-listed, six-storey "French chateau with Versailles-style gardens", plus 200 acres of rolling pastures, lakes and forests? And even on such a low valuation, with borrowings of only £1m, why should the school close at all? Why were parents given just half a term's notice of closure, without any compensation whatever? Would the Charity Commission consider replacing such a clear bunch of incompetents with a new governing body?

On 28 June the commission delivered its verdict, allowing Fellows to crow: "The Charity Commission has informed us that following their inquiries they are happy the governors have handled the recent events properly." So that's all right then.

And what of the headmistress, Hilary Moriarty? She's apparently in the clear too, having taken the precaution to announce her resignation some time ago. "The captain jumped ship before any of us knew it was even heading for the rocks," said angry staff. "After the closure announcement, she arranged a few meetings with us, but simply walked out if anyone asked awkward questions." Bedgebury teaching staff now face an uncertain future. But not Mrs Moriarty. Months before the crisis broke, she had already lined herself up another job. What is it? Having presided over the destruction of one of Kent's finest boarding schools, Hilary is now "national director" of the UK Boarding Schools' Association!

PS: Bedgebury had its best-ever A level results this year, thus "rising 140 places in the Sunday Times league table," announced Mrs Moriarty in a valedictory letter to parents last week. "I was so proud of the girls and the staff that I thought I would burst."

HIGH PRINCIPALS

"WE have to face the harsh reality that we're a smaller college than we thought we were," says former Keighley College chair of governors Lynne Joyce of the latest mishap at the troubled college.

Computer experts who were brought in to tackle glitches with the system monitoring student numbers and progress discovered that the college had rather fewer students than it thought it had. That meant the college had to pay back the government funding it had claimed on the basis of the numbers last September. Of course, that money has been spent and the college's budget has had to been thrown out of the window.

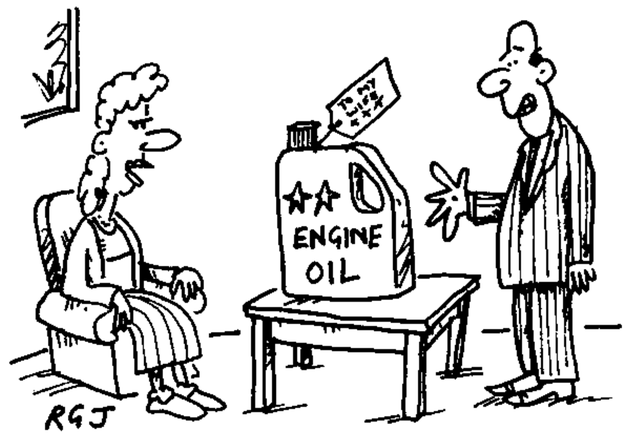
Up to 40 jobs are likely to go in teaching, admin and even management positions – just one year after Principal David Gates announced 50 redundancies, before departing for a new job at Doncaster (*Eye* 1146).

Councillor Joyce resigned the chairmanship of the governors in June after Ofsted inspectors found several aspects of the college, including its leadership, inadequate.

SO. Farewell then Little Blossoms Nursery at Solihull College, which looks after children of students and staff, with extra places going to non-college parents.

It also provides placements for students on nursery nursing courses and is rated "good" by Ofsted. But in April the college announced it would close from 1 September. After complaints from horrified parents that it was too late to find an alternative, closure was postponed; but college principal Brenda Sheils insists it will shut next March.

A number of students say they will be unable to study next year without easily accessible childcare.



"I'm not fooled George. You forgot it was our anniversary and bought me something from the shop at the petrol station again, didn't you?"

SIGNAL FAILURES

Turning the tables

THERE are still some people in Britain who seem to believe Labour wants more people to travel by train. Network Rail directors, for instance, who want an extra £8bn to help the railways cope with 30 percent more demand.

Their biggest idea is a £3.5bn Thameslink infrastructure upgrade to support more "on-train capacity". But they seem not to have noticed that the government's answer to overcrowding is whopping fare rises designed, in the words of First Capital Connect (FCC), to "reduce passenger numbers".

FCC operates Thameslink with almost 25 percent fewer carriages than British Rail did, and many trains have just four carriages instead of eight. The government won't sanction new carriages to make full use of the existing infrastructure: that would inflate operating cost and reduce the overcrowding that supposedly justifies fare rises. What matters is that FCC pays its £808m premium to the government during its franchise.

PS: Could "the Thameslink programme", as proposed by NR, be related to the project named Thameslink 2000 by BR managers who correctly predicted Thameslink would need more capacity by 2000? Yes; but "Thameslink 2000" is rather embarrassing in 2006 when construction work hasn't even started.

TRANSPORT Secretary Douglas Alexander has berated the rail industry for not making trains more energy efficient, while the car industry "has made great strides".

As he's new to the job, perhaps someone should tell him that electric trains are more energy-efficient than diesel ones – and in nine years New Labour hasn't authorised a single major route electrification.

I-SPY *East Finchley tube station*

Submitted by Andy Jaeger

THE Department for Transport is now asking rail regulators to investigate the rolling stock leasing companies.

"The department is not satisfied the prices charged for the rolling stock which leasing companies inherited from British Rail are fair and competitive," it moaned. It's a shame the DfT can't afford a fortnightly copy of the *Eye*, where civil servants could have read – in October 1997 – about the "high leasing fees charged for BR's old rubbish" (*Eye* 935).

TIRED of complaints from customers, some of Britain's train firms seem to think attack is the best form of defence.

Last month Simon Topman, president of Birmingham chamber of commerce, found himself under police investigation after he asked a Virgin Trains steward to clean the food and drink stains left on his table by earlier passengers. The steward wiped the patch directly in front of him, but Topman thought his £186 first-class ticket entitled him to insist the whole table be cleaned. Virgin's staff disagreed and police escorted him off the train at Coventry. Virgin insisted it wouldn't tolerate abuse against staff; but Insp Knacker merely told the *Coventry Evening Telegraph*: "We are treating it as a crime of unacceptable behaviour." By the customer, that is.

'Dr B Ching'

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

WATER PALAVER

THIS year's drought has brought the threat of serious water shortages on the island of Jersey much closer.

In response to the crisis Jersey's environment minister, Senator Freddie Cohen, has drafted legislation to restrict the extraction of groundwater and introduce metering of domestic supplies. Alas Sen Cohen's law has been vetoed by his colleagues in the States (parliament) because they have chosen to believe the word of a water diviner rather than that of geologists.

In the 1980s the States commissioned the British Geological Survey (BGS), at a cost of tens of thousands of pounds, to carry out an exhaustive study of the island's water resources. Much of the island's groundwater, it found, is polluted with nitrates and pesticides. The local geology (predominantly granite and shale) means that water is scarce more than a few metres below the surface. Alarm was calmed, however, by local diviner George Langlois. Armed only with a forked twig, he proclaimed that Jersey did not have a water crisis at all. The island's water, he insisted, originates from France. It is, er, pulled by the moon's gravity via wide streams which run beneath the English Channel.

To use the technical *argot*, that is what geologists call "complete and utter bollocks". However, senators chose to believe the soothing assurances of the man with the twitching stick – and did nothing.

Meanwhile groundwater levels continued to fall. In some low-lying areas it is tainted by seawater, a sure sign of over-extraction. This year's drought concentrated a few minds and led to Sen Cohen's proposed water restrictions.

Re-enter Langlois who, fresh from announcing the presence of large oil reserves under the island – another geological impossibility – again assured the States that Jersey's water supplies were inexhaustible. It takes just a day for water to travel from France to Jersey, he said. The BGS, on the other hand, estimates that the water currently being consumed with merry abandon arrived in the form of rainfall 57,000 years ago. So many States members believe the water diviner's mumbo-jumbo that Sen Cohen has had to withdraw his law. To break the impasse he has proposed setting up a test at the taxpayer's expense. Langlois will use his divining "powers" to pinpoint the location of two of the "underground streams from France". The States will then spend thousands of pounds sinking two boreholes. Any water found will be chemically tested to see whether it originates from Jersey or France.

Sen Cohen hopes the results will finally convince his colleagues of the need for water conservation. Alas, while there may not be much water on Jersey, the wells of ignorance are very deep.

TEX APPEAL

FOLLOWING the triumph of Tory West Sussex county council's £40m "Fastway" bus lane for the Gatwick area (*Eye* 1162) – £9m over-budget, plagued by accidents, spurned by the public – the council hopes to get government funding to do it all again.

This time the plan is to build a "Coastal Expressway" on which the satellite-navigated wonderbus will link south coast towns between Brighton and Portsmouth. With Fastway's safety record – at least eight accidents since the Gatwick service opened two years ago – the oldies of Worthing and Bognor had better beware.

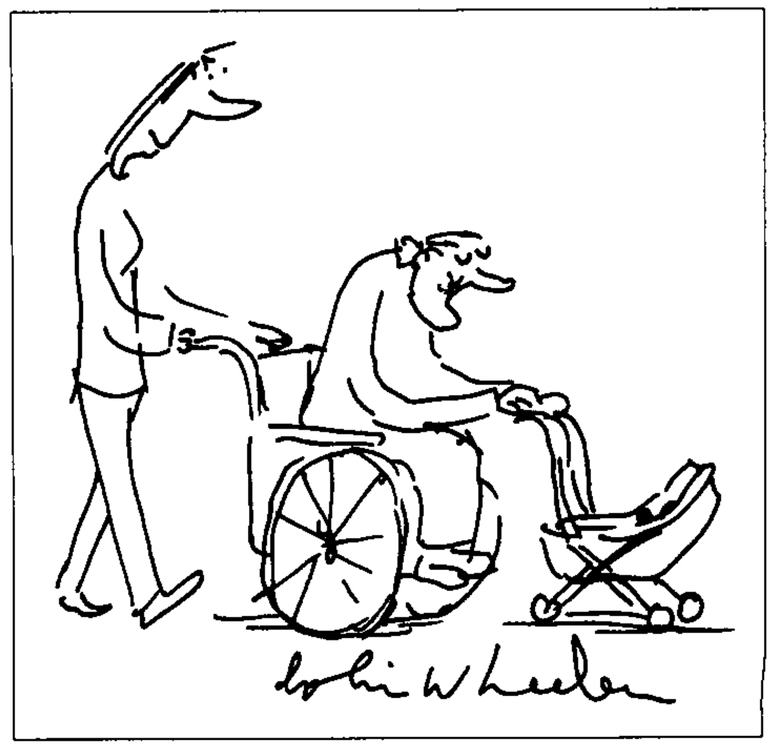
At least Metrobus, which runs the buses, takes safety seriously. Two Fastway drivers involved in accidents (caused, it has been claimed, by management pressure to stick to reckless timetables) have been sacked. Happily no council officer involved in the fiasco has faced any disciplinary action. And the man supposedly responsible for the whole shebang – Lt-Col "Tex" Pemberton, WSCC's cabinet member for highways – blithely rides on. After it was discovered that council taxpayers had footed a £1,360 bill just to send Tex, another councillor and two officers for a night's jolly at the London Park Lane Hilton, where Tex picked up a much-deserved prize for "outstanding contribution to local transport", he explained to the *Crawley Observer* that he had had to buy a few drinks for his "team", and that "at Park Lane prices, this didn't come cheap". Easy come, easy go!

● *See Letters, page 14*

ILLEGAL EAGLES

IN 2004 the district auditor found that Bath and North-east Somerset (Banes) council's knock-down sale of its housing stock to a housing trust had involved "inappropriate and unlawful actions on several fronts" – in particular the distribution of biased, "scaremongering" publicity material to tenants ahead of the transfer vote (*Eye* 1102).

The "unbalanced, one-sided, misleading and unlawful" propaganda cost the taxpayer £500,000; the auditor's investigation and Banes's hiring of solicitors Eversheds to argue its case cost the same again. Meanwhile tenant Alexander Johnston, whose one-man campaign exposed the unlawful activity, asked the council to refund his modest costs – about £300. Instead of coughing up, Banes asked Eversheds for advice. You don't have to pay, said Eversheds – oh, and here's our bill for £8,528.15. Johnston complained to the district auditor who, after a further investigation costing £30,000, found that the £8,528.15 payment had been unlawful. So Banes, in the wrong all along, has spent a further £38,500 of taxpayers' cash attempting to justify its spiteful and illegal behaviour in denying Mr Johnston his £300. Which he still hasn't had.



● IT'S ALL probably because Banes officials have more important things to think about. Following the fearless campaign against hairdressers who offer customers a free glass of wine (*Eye* 1162), the council's enforcers have turned their attention to shopkeepers who think of inventive ways to attract customers. So far this summer a mannequin dressed as a Roman centurion and a pair of six-foot ice creams have been confiscated in a "crackdown" on pavement obstructions. The council kidnappers then demanded £20 for their return. Brilliant!

CORONATION CHICKEN

ISLE of Wight council is getting used to life under its new chief executive – the seventh to grasp the poisoned chalice in as many years (*see Eye* 1155).

Latest "new broom" is Joe Duckworth, formerly deputy dawg at Westminster city council, hired for £150,000 a year. The council's wages computer crashed when it attempted to transfer Duckworth's first salary instalment at the end of June, because no one had ever imagined it would be required to pay anyone more than £9,999.99 a month. Programmers were called in hurriedly to rewrite the software so that all staff could be paid. And not a moment too soon – eight new "director" posts have been announced, with salaries of up to £120,000.

Inflated wage packets are not the only Westminster innovation bemusing the caulkheads. Spin-doctors from Westminster council have been drafted in at a cost of £10,000 a month to "overhaul" the council's "communications strategy". One option under consideration is to spend £1m launching a free weekly newspaper to rival the island's existing paid-for *County Press*. The *CP* is not known as the most penetrating investigative organ, but even its occasional squeaks of criticism are too much for Tory council leader Andy Sutton, who recently called the paper "crap" and accused it of "talking down" the Island. Westminster's communications department, of course, is headed by Alex "chicken wrestler" Aiken (*Eyes passim*). Westminster currently have the contract to run the communications department at Richmond upon Thames where, the *Eye* revealed last year, Aiken ran a campaign of bullying against a local independent community website which failed to toe the council line. So, a new era of free speech beckons!

PS: Duckworth, who in his first week pompously told staff he doesn't like to be called "Jack", is now known affectionately around County Hall as "Vera".

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON KNIFE & PACKER

YOU CAN'T BEAT A BLACKBERRY - THE WORLD OF EMAILS AT ONE'S FINGERTIPS, NO MATTER WHERE!
COME ON, JEZ. THIS IS HARDLY THE TIME OR PLACE FOR FIELDING WORK-RELATED EMAILS!
GALLERY OPENING TONITE
OH THIS ISN'T WORK-RELATED... I'M EMAILING THE ARTIST TO COMPLAIN ABOUT HIS CLICHÉD USE OF GOUACHE
"CC" ME IN, MAN. IT'S A DISGRACE!

Dear Resident/Occupier

HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 – SECTION 154

It has come to my attention that the Bush/Tree on your property, has grown to such an extent that it is now Blocking the Pubic Highway.

Brent Council

NOOKS and CORNERS

ANYONE who has travelled along the south bank of the estuary of the River Clyde, en route perhaps to Wemyss Bay and the Isle of Bute, will have noticed the once stupendous 700ft-long range of brick warehouses at Greenock.

These were warehouses for storing West Indies sugar, built in 1882-86 by Walter Kinipple, the engineer who designed the James Watt Dock which lies behind. And they are no ordinary warehouses: the brickwork is enlivened with polychromy and relieved by tall thin blank arcades, while the long length is punctuated by raised gabled sections. They are the sort of 19th century industrial buildings which, if surviving in London or Manchester, or even in Liverpool, would now be converted into flats.

Largely abandoned and derelict for more than 40 years, the Greenock Sugar Warehouses are listed category A. They have been on the Scottish Civic Trust's register of Buildings at Risk since 1995 and the World Monuments Fund put them on its Watch List of the World's 100 most endangered sites in 2001, regarding them as one of the last and largest surviving cast-iron and brick industrial buildings in Scotland.

Things began to look up for the warehouses in 2002 when the Prince of Wales's Phoenix Trust, dedicated to regenerating old industrial sites, took an interest after an application for their demolition had been turned down. The trust collaborated with the owners of the warehouses, Clydeport – which runs all the ports in the West of Scotland – and with Inverclyde Council and Scottish Enterprise Renfrewshire to find a sustainable future for the site. John McAslan & Partners, architects, and other experts in regeneration were appointed as consultants to prepare a feasibility study. And the following year James Watt College expressed serious interest in locating some of its activities in the sugar warehouses. At last it looked as if these magnificent structures might be saved.

In 2003, Clydeport was acquired by Peel Holdings Ltd, a large company based in Manchester which specialises in developing ports and industrial buildings. Peel Holdings then commissioned a masterplan for the development of Clydeport's property along the Clyde. This envisaged the area around the Sugar Warehouses being developed as an extravagant marina, residential and leisure complex, although the use of the warehouses themselves was not specified. The potential of long-depressed Greenock (birthplace of James Watt) with its good communications with Glasgow upstream was at last being appreciated; property values were rising and new housing has been built which actually imitates the arcaded brick style of Kinipple's warehouses. But while minimal temporary repairs to the roofs were made to comply with a repairs notice served by Inverclyde Council, little was done to make the Sugar Warehouses secure from vandalism, although discussions with James Watt College continued.

And then, during the night of 12 June, the Sugar Warehouses "went on fire" (as they say in Glasgow). The fire was very severe – partly because, for reasons best known to itself, Clydeport had chosen to store tyres in one of the buildings (piled up around the remains of Garvel Island House, which once stood here). The roofs were all destroyed; internal timber floors collapsed and parts of the buildings had to be demolished on safety grounds. Further destruction was planned but was prevented by external pressure, although some "controlled" demolition has been carried out supervised by Historic Scotland.

The leader of Inverclyde Council, Alan Blair, commented afterwards: "It is hard to believe that this fire was simply an accident in particular as no gas or electrical services exist within the building. I hope that the emergency services can report on the cause of the fire quickly." That report might make interesting reading when it appears. Meanwhile, although their basic structure is sound and the Phoenix Trust is battling on to save them, the prospects for the Sugar Warehouses look bleaker than ever.

THE case of the sale of the chairs in Sir William Turner's Hospital at Kirkleatham (Eye 1160) has interesting implications. The trustees maintain that their sale has been forced on them by the Charity Commission, which has insisted that any expenditure to maintain and insure them would not be in accordance with their charitable objectives. A similar argument has been used with regard to the Coram Foundation and the collection of paintings assembled by its saintly founder, Captain Coram. Some lawyers, however, say this is a misunderstanding of the legal position and that, after all, if a founder embellished the building he endowed it must have been his intention for the works of art to be enjoyed by the beneficiaries of his charity. If the contrary, utilitarian and philistine argument is correct, it would mean that all almshouses, schools, universities and other charities would have to sell all the works of art they possess. Is that really what the Charity Commission requires: the further artistic impoverishment of the country?

'Piloti'

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH

The ultimate bohemian—drunken, drug-crazed, debauched and violent, dying young in abject poverty...
ROYAL ACADEMY
MODIGLIANI AND HIS MODELS
Corny bastard!
His work's rubbish, too.

Letters

Stamp it out

Sir,

I'm not one to cancel my subscription but the serial killer stamp designs (Eye 1162, page 22) were in the worst possible taste and lacked even the compensation of humour. Furthermore, the Queen's head (God bless you, ma'am) and denomination should not appear on a separate background. If you're going to get it wrong, at least get it right.

DAI JEFFRIES,

Aldershot, Hants.

Sir,

The "New from Royal Mail stamp collection" (1162, p22) was in very bad taste and disgusted me. I am one of your younger readers and I do find Private Eye very funny. I shall continue to buy Private Eye, but I am disappointed in you guys. Couldn't the space have been used for a John Prescott gag, much more amusing.

HAMISH HUNTER,

Via email.

Balls up

Sir,

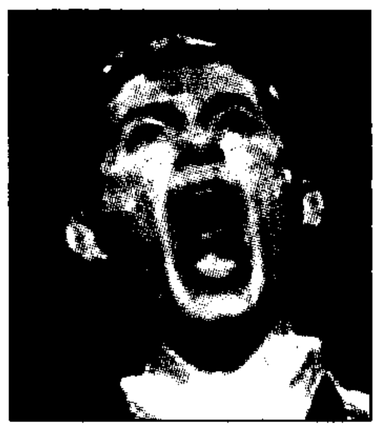
You need to be careful when putting footy related covers on your organ. The Chiswick branch of the esteemed W.H. Smug had the entire stock in the sports section!

Sing when you're winning!

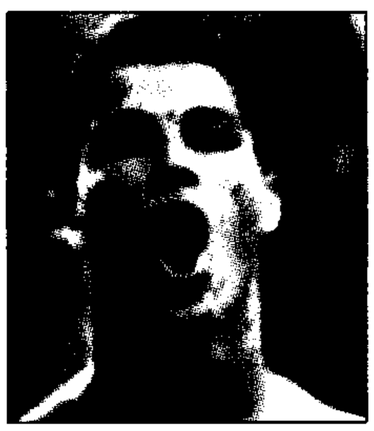
Regards,
ALAN JESSOP

Managing Director, Compass Independent Book Sales Ltd.

Lookalike



Ronaldo



Evans

Sir,

I'm a long-time fan of Lee Evans, with his hilarious comic routines and comic pratfalls. I was wondering if Cristiano Ronaldo was also as good at telling jokes?

Yours faithfully,
HUGH SHIPMAN,

Via email.

Selling out

Sir,

I have just visited my local branch of a well-known High Street newsagents here in Burgess Hill, and spied what looked suspiciously like a local government officer buying up every copy of your organ – what looked like in the region of 30 copies. Might this activity by any chance be related to an item in that edition (Eye 1162, Rotten Boroughs) about a well-known local councillor, one Lieutenant-Colonel "Tex" Pemberton? I think we should be told. But do I not spy a brilliant money-making and circulation-boosting ruse now clearly available to you?

Yours decidedly sickened,
TOM WINDSOR.

Burgess Hill, West Sussex.

Out of tune

Sir,

I read with concern your report on Cadogan Hall, intrigued at your usage of the word "floundering".

Cadogan Hall, in only the second year of operation, is looking forward to a full series of concerts with the English Chamber Orchestra, The Kings Consort, education concerts with Southbank Sinfonia, repeat visits from the Monteverdi Choir and Soloists, the London Concert Choir and Brodsky Quartet – all of whom have seen their own audiences develop, as a result of the venue's additional capacity. The RPO, following a string of consecutive sell-out concerts, return with another strong eight concert series (alongside the ECO's nine concerts this leaves plenty of other days for local, national and international orchestras to perform).

Cadogan is set to host a season of international orchestras including the St Petersburg Symphony. The BBC was so excited following last year's Proms Chamber Music Series at Cadogan (which saw audiences double in size) that they've programmed extra Saturday matinee concerts to further the series.

Average audience numbers are a shade over 700 for each concert and we're increasing the number of free brochures to 100,000 per edition as demand is so high.

Local business, restaurants and hotels are enjoying their slice of the cake too.

This "floundering" success costs the Arts Council or the taxpayer nothing; the entire operation is privately funded.

From nothing to the above in less than two years is surely not "floundering"; perhaps "Lunchtime O'Boulez" should trawl elsewhere before making crabbie remarks.

Long may this "floundering" success continue.

Love the magazine by the way! Maybe we should advertise.

With best wishes,
ADAM MCGINLAY

General Manager, Cadogan Hall.

Strong south-westerly

Sir,

Cornish language (Eyes passim). Dolly Pentreath! Scatel angow, Felix Moore. The last native speaker was John Davey of Zennor, who died in 1891 – not quite two hundred years ago!*

Yours etc,
J.E. MAURICE,

Aberaeron, Ceredigion.

**Scatel angow – pack of lies.*

Mine of information

Sir,

V. Shearman thinks UDM miners deserve no sympathy, however they are shafted, because in 1984/5 they "knifed their fellow workers in the back" by declining to join Arthur Scargill's strike. In fact they repeatedly said that, despite their – as it turned out, fully justified – scepticism about the possibility of victory, they would loyally support the strike if a democratic ballot mandated it. But Scargill refused to hold such a ballot, obviously because he feared losing it. I cannot see that the UDM miners were at all at fault.

Faithfully,
DAVID WATKINS,

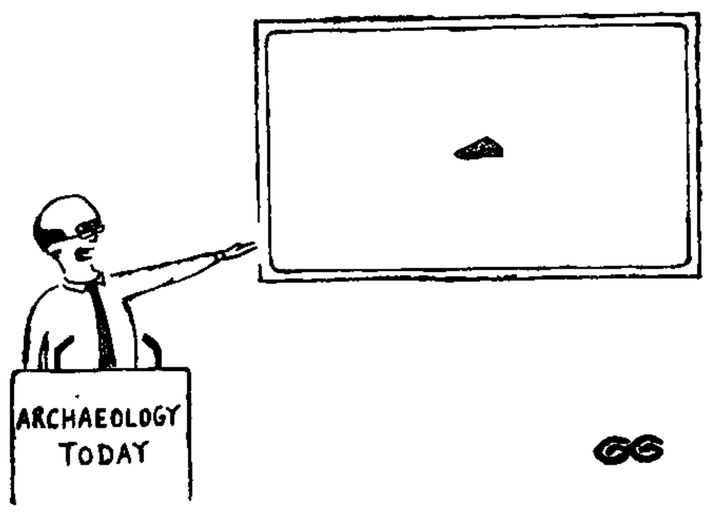
Cardiff.

Struck dumb

Sir,

Identifying the "first English monarch to be divorced" (Dumb Britain, Eye 1162) is not easy; it was certainly not Henry VIII! If we set aside the lax marital practices of some pre-Conquest kings, the correct answer is King John, who divorced Isabella of Gloucester in 1199 in order to marry pre-teen babe Isabella of Agouleme. Henry VIII was in fact the ***last*** *ruling English monarch to be divorced, although George I had divorced his first wife when he was still only Elector of Hanover.*

Yours ever (the pedant),
ANN GEVIN.



"The exciting news is that the results from our accelerated mass spectrometer, magnetometer and thermoluminescence tests confirm we have indeed unearthed an old piece of broken pottery"

Chernobyl fallout

Sir,

After reading Dr Johnston's letter (Eye 1160) and Mr Bishop's letter in (Eye 1162), one might get the impression that radioactive ash from the core of a burning nuclear reactor is as harmless as confetti. However, careful scrutiny of the 115-page UNSCEAR report on Chernobyl (called Annex J) demonstrates that this is far from being the case.

For the sake of clarity, I would like to liberally scatter other material from the UNSCEAR report on to your organ.

The sentence in the report (para 413) quoted by Mr Bishop actually begins "Apart from the substantial increase in thyroid cancer after childhood exposure observed in Belarus, in the Russian Federation and in Ukraine [4,000 so far], there is no evidence of a major public health impact..." Slightly out of con-text then.

The paragraph continues, "For some cancers no increase would have been anticipated as yet, given the latency period of around 10 years for solid tumours." Bit too early to jump to conclusions then.

The report also states (para. 412) "The papers available for review by the Committee to date regarding the evaluation of health effects of the Chernobyl accident have in many instances suffered from methodological weaknesses that make them difficult to interpret." So there are reports of health deterioration, but they are not accurate or consistent enough.

(Para. 418) "Present knowledge of the late effects of protracted exposure to ionizing radiation is limited... any increase in cancer incidence or mortality will most certainly be difficult to detect in epidemiological studies."

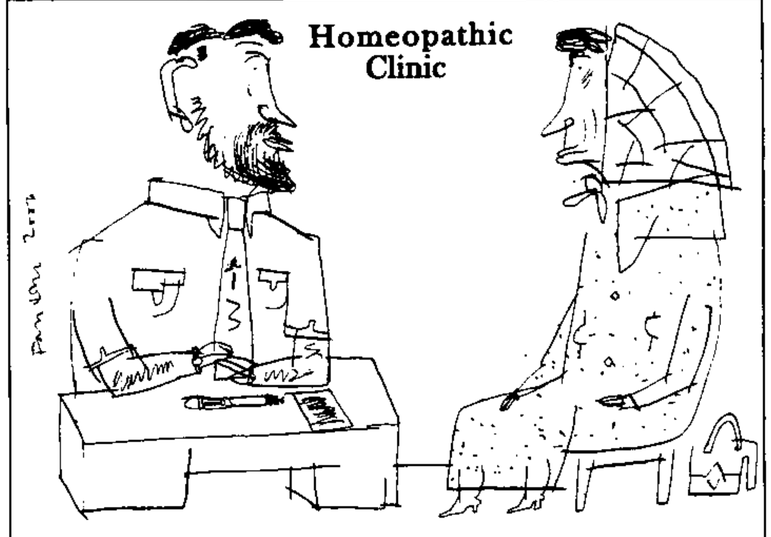
(Para. 421) "Finally, it should be emphasized that although those exposed as children and the emergency and recovery operation workers are at increased risk of radiation induced effects, the vast majority of the population need not live in fear of serious health consequences from the Chernobyl accident." So that's all right then, as long as you are not one of the 600,000 liquidators who cleaned up the mess or currently under the age of 35.

It is not scaremongering to acknowledge that great damage was done to the health and prospects of the people in the region by the Chernobyl disaster. Unfortunately the damage done by radiation may never be fully attributable, due to the indeterminate effect of radiation on cancer, the scale and complexity of the disaster and the inadequacies of health statistics in the region.

Yours faithfully,
PHILIP SMITH,

Haywards Heath, West Sussex.

Scenes You Seldom See



"You're not at all well. If I were you, I'd see a doctor"

History is bunk?

Sir,

It is curious to see more British troops being deployed – during "History Matters" week – in Afghanistan, a country whose terrain has helped to repel previous invaders like the Russians and the... er... British. It calls to mind a question from the History A level special paper from the glory days of humanistic learning in the seventies: "History teaches us that 'history teaches us nothing'. Discuss."

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW FALUDY,

Drayton, Hants.

Photo opportunity

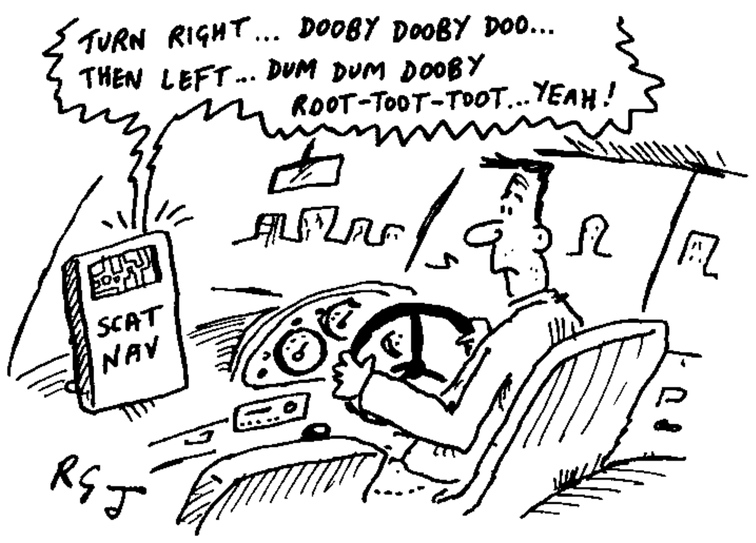
Sir,

Literary review (Eye 1161) claimed there were 8,363 primes between 1,000 and 10,000. In a correction (Letters, Eye 1162), you claimed it should have read "3,363 between 10,000 and 100,000". In fact, the figure of 8,363 was accurate, and it was only the range over which primes were counted that needed correction.

Since you obviously require an example to go by, perhaps it might help to print from your archives a photograph of an experienced editor demonstrating a firm grasp of other people's figures?

I remain, Sir, &c,
ASHLEY BALLARD,

Skerton, Lancaster.



Badgers: TB or not TB

Sir,

Your correspondents on TB (Eye 1162) need to familiarise themselves with common sense and scientific understanding; qualities which, contrary to what TB policy regarding badgers might suggest, are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Charlotte Rose MenvSci: It is wrong to say that there is scientific consensus that cattle-to-cattle transmission is a "far greater factor" than badger-to-cattle transmission. On a national scale, we simply don't know for certain which is greatest. The consensus is that both animals play a major role in TB transmission. Given this, is it really sensible to appease one of two acknowledged major sources? If we were able to magically cure every cow in Britain now, within six months TB would be erupting again in the usual places due to badgers.

D Williams: In fact, the available figures show that in TB hotspots around 15 percent of badgers killed on roads tested positive for TB, compared with around 0.5 percent of cattle. The data released so far from the proactive culls shows an average of 11.4 percent of badgers infected (not "less than 10 percent"). These data suggest that, in TB hotspots, the disease is up to 30 times more prevalent in badgers than in cattle.

Jeremy Wade: If the 29 percent decrease in TB incidences is genuine (rather than an artefact of the recent use of Dutch rather than British tuberculin, as is suspected) the number of cattle culled in 2006 will still be more than 3,000 percent higher than in 1986, when effective badger removal was replaced with "half-arsed", and ultimately no removal.

A plot of TB incidences since 1986 shows a consistent exponential national trend, with a sine-wave type "blip" caused by FMD. It is difficult to see how BSE could have had any significant affect on TB incidences, particularly when compared with an acknowledged major cause of the disease, infected badgers.

Anthony Cheke: It is hardly surprising that "nature has absorbed [badger] numbers pretty well". Badgers are omnivorous opportunistic foragers and, in the absence of intervention by their only remaining natural predator (man), their numbers have grown without check. As a scientific paper published in this month's Journal of Zoology reiterates by implication, it is this growth in numbers that is by far the most likely cause of a massive decline in hedgehog numbers since the 1980s, and predictions by conservationists that hedgehogs could face extinction by 2025.

Perhaps Cheke should venture out and visit the thousands of square miles of Britain where habitat has increased and pesticide use is effectively non-existent; where badger numbers have grown by thousands of percent, and hedgehogs are effectively extinct due to predation by badgers. Alternatively, he might stay at home and devote his time to what he implies is the simple task of developing a BTB vaccine; a challenge that has for decades stumped hundreds of researchers.

Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS FENWICK,
Mid Wales.

(That's enough badgers. Ed.)

Swindon wilts

Sir,

Regarding Nooks & Corners, Eye 1162, you (along with Fiona Reynolds) have missed the sarcasm evident in Tony Hillier's poem. The Tabernacle refers to the Baptist Tabernacle, one of Swindon's great old buildings, ruthlessly torn down and replaced. The Mechanics meanwhile, refers to The Mechanics Institute, the "single most important historical site in Swindon today" and of national importance according to www.swindonweb.com. Sadly it is also Swindon's most neglected building, being allowed to rot and decay. There is great irony in The National Trust moving to Swindon where so many great old buildings lie derelict and unloved, whilst money is poured into nearby tourist traps like Avebury (mostly built in the 1920s).

DR RICHARD BARNES,
Via email.

Case for the defence

Sir,

The Chris Moyles quote in World Cup Balls, issue 1162, is surely meant to be ironic, not a balls-up. The England team's greatness in Germany indeed stopped at the defence. Moyles, with unusual wit, is echoing the famous Dorothy Parker criticism of Katherine Hepburn – "She runs the gamut of emotions from A to B".

Maybe you should ask for a refund of the tenner.

KEVIN HALL,
Shoreham-by-Sea.

"I told you that fan was too low!"

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"Men don't like it when the foot is on the other shoe."
Women's Hour, Radio Four
(Paul French)

"They're like a fish out of water which has been thrown in at the deep end."
STEVE DAVIS, BBC1
(Stephen Johnson)

"I love England, especially the food. There's nothing I like more than a lovely bowl of pasta."
NAOMI CAMPBELL
(B. Beer)

"Wakefield will have to go back to the drawing room."
PHIL CLARKE, Sky Sports 3
(Gary Newman)

"You need a winning car to win in Formula One."
JAMES ALLEN, ITV
(Guy Cudmore)

SOLUTIONS

"Vegetation Solutions" – *tree surgeons*

"The Buying Solution" – *estate agents*

"Hollingworth & Moss: intelligent library solutions" – *bookbinders*

"HB publications: World Class Learning Solutions" – *text books*

"Philips Wardrobe Care Solution: The three-in-one total clothes care solution" – *irons*

All submitted by readers

Wimbledon Lookalike Special

Mauresmo

Legolas

Sir,

Whilst watching Wimbledon I noticed a striking similarity between the women's champion, Amélie Mauresmo, and the elven archer Legolas from the Lord of the Rings trilogy. Perhaps this explains the accuracy of some of her longer-range shots?

Yours,
JEREMY WILKINSON,
Via email.

Clijsters

Princess Fiona

Sir,

Kim Clijsters and Princess Fiona from Shrek, it's uncanny.

CHARLIE HUMPHREYS,
Via email.

Henman

Miliband

Sir,

Mr Tim Henman and New Labour apparatchik, David Miliband?

PETER WAINSCOAT,
Huddersfield, W.Yorks.

Letter from **Managua**

from Our Own Correspondent

IT SEEMS no Latin American story is complete these days without a reference to Hugo Chavez. And so it is with Nicaragua, where we are in the thick of a presidential election campaign: according to the foreign press, we will soon succumb to the wave of anti-US, anti-capitalist populism emanating from our comrades in Chavez's Venezuela.

To Nicaraguans, this "Chavismo" analysis is insulting. We didn't spend the 1970s and 1980s killing each other in the tens of thousands to submit now to the will of a nutter in Caracas. So if we do decide to saddle ourselves with an authoritarian demagogue, we shall do so for our own reasons.

Mind you, a bit of Venezuelan oil money isn't unwelcome. If Chavez wants to pay for Cuban doctors to perform cataract operations in the Nicaraguan countryside, you won't hear us complain. But there is a difference between the benevolent redistribution of petrodollars and direct interference in the democratic processes of another country – a distinction that Daniel Ortega and the last remnants of the revolutionary old guard seem unable to comprehend.

Ortega, former president and still leader of the main Sandinista party, apparently sees no contradiction between touching up Chavez for campaign funding while simultaneously denouncing even the most diplomatically expressed opinions of the US ambassador as unacceptable interventions in Nicaragua's internal affairs. Ortega's obliviousness to these double standards is perhaps one reason his repeated attempts to return to power since the fall of the revolutionary regime in 1990 have ended in failure.

Ortega's reputation has never recovered from his involvement, in 1999, in one of the shabbiest episodes in Nicaragua's post-revolutionary history. With Arnoldo Alemán, then president and a supposed arch-enemy of the Sandinistas, Ortega forged a pact to reform the national constitution and electoral laws. With both men facing legal problems at the time, many were suspicious of a clause granting them an automatic seat in the legislative assembly and with it permanent immunity from prosecution.

The clause was subsequently repealed by Enrique Bolaños, Alemán's successor as president. Alemán was arrested on charges of fraud, money laundering and embezzlement, for which he was sentenced to 20 years' house arrest in 2004. This hasn't prevented him from remaining a powerful force in the Liberal Constitutionalist Party (PLC). The party's chosen presidential candidate, José Rizo, was endorsed by Alemán via a bin Laden-esque video message during the PLC's primary convention in March.

The electorate has become increasingly fatigued with the shenanigans of Ortega, Alemán et al. In a country with a median age of 30 and with the second highest poverty levels in the western hemisphere (after Haiti), nostalgia for the revolutionary heyday is fading fast. In opinion polls this year Ortega has consistently ranked behind Eduardo Montealegre, a former Wall Street banker and a proponent of aggressive free-market reforms. Ortega also faces strong competition from the breakaway Sandinista Renewal Movement (MRS), whose leaders openly court North American investors and laugh about their "politically immature" days fighting US-backed Contra forces in the mountains.

A dominant theme of the Montealegre and MRS campaigns has been the need to move away from old conflicts and develop international cooperation. A strong showing in the opinion polls suggests their message, platitudinous or not, is proving popular with young voters. During a recent tête-à-tête with Ortega, Chavez championed his crusade against US imperialism in such aggressive terms that the biggest Nicaraguan daily newspaper subsequently ran the headline "Chavez: it's War". An immediate slip in Ortega's popularity rating and an overwhelmingly negative editorial reception indicated that war, metaphorical or not, is no longer a vote-winning slogan in Nicaragua.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

"I believe it's a vision from God," Andrea Webster told reporters as she showed them round an eighty-acre brownfield site in north-west Yorkshire, "and I shall build it here. Christians must try different ways to reach the youth of this country, and it came to me in a flash that a Christian theme park would allow people to have a fun day out, while also learning about Jesus. So here it is. This is the place where Disney will meet the Bible."

The accountant-turned-businesswoman explained that "children will have the experience of being expelled from the Garden of Eden, walking on water, and making a virtual-reality flight from Egypt. Or they can be swallowed by a whale like Jonah, escape from a lion's den like Daniel, or slide down the Tower of Babel. There'll be a Noah's Ark water feature, a Garden of Gethsemane, and a display showing how God created the world in seven days. I've already hired an architect who worked on Castleford shopping centre and Butlins in Skegness, so my plans are well advanced.

"The only problem will be finance, but if I can persuade a million Christians to donate £144 each, that will fund the development. This is no idle daydream. America already has a Christian theme park, The Holy Land Experience in Orlando, Florida, where tourists can eat ice cream on the Via Dolorosa, as Jesus is spat on by Roman soldiers, while being nailed to a cross. If we all truly believe, Britain could have something just as wonderful, in just two years from now." *(Horticulture Week, 27/4/06. Spotter: Angus Morrison)*

– o –

"We were called in by a neighbour, who was concerned about the huge mound of earth in Henry Mora's front yard," Captain Rich Baldwin of the California fire department told reporters in Montclair. "And when we arrived, we couldn't believe what we found. There was a hole, over sixty feet deep, with no reinforcement at all, and two men inside were using a bucket and rope to remove more dirt. The earth could have collapsed on them at any moment. It's amazing nobody was killed."

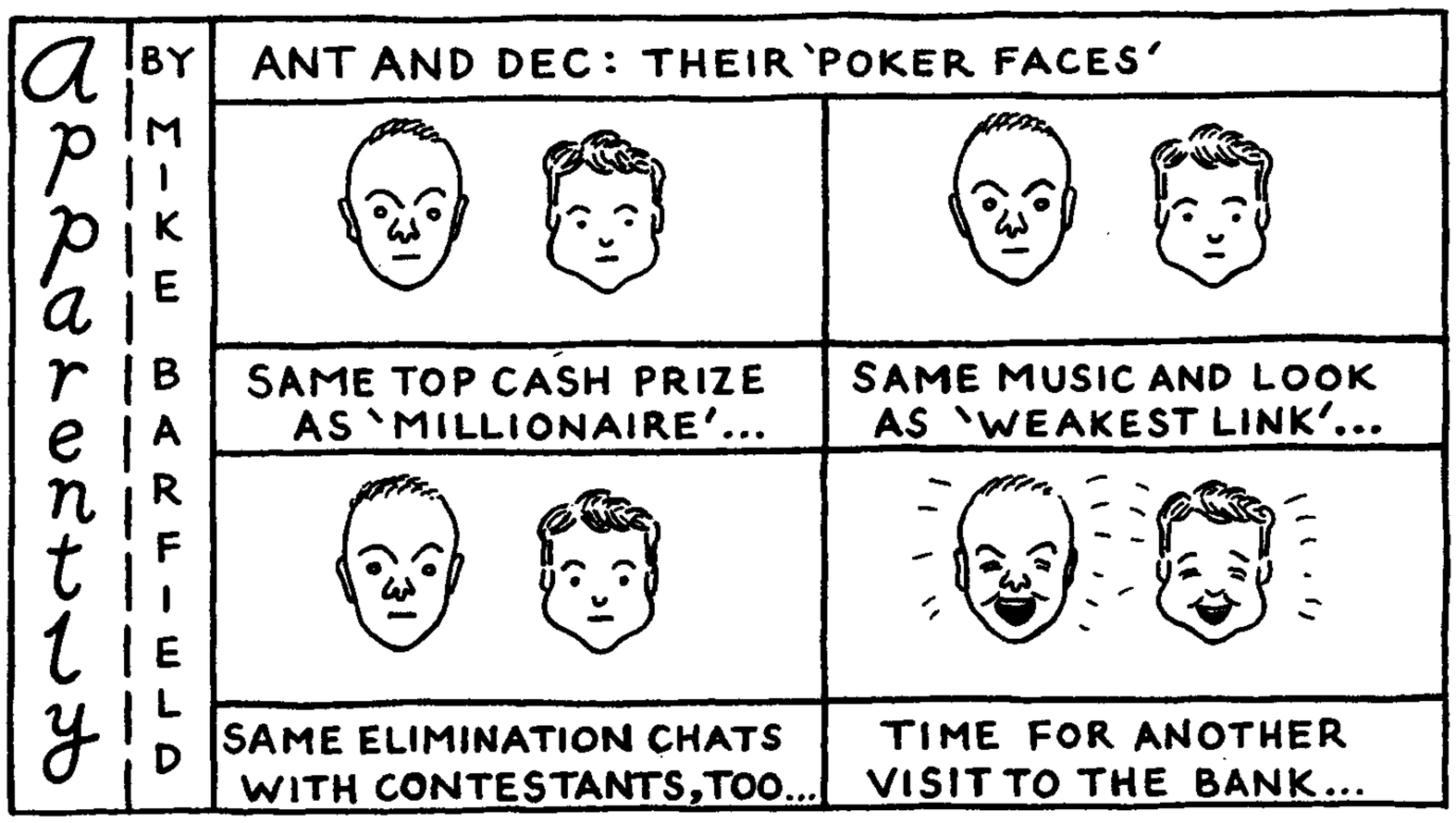
Later, Henry Mora explained how he'd begun digging the hole, two weeks earlier. "My gold detector machine picked up a signal near the front patio, so I figured maybe there was something down there. You would logically conclude that, right? So I started digging. I only intended to go three or four feet, but I got carried away when I found traces of gold dust in the dirt. And the detector kept beeping, so I kept digging. Looking back, I can see that the dig has got out of hand, and I've been ordered to pack the dirt back into the ground at once, in case I weaken the foundations of nearby houses. Do I regret ever starting? In a way yes, and in a way no, because I still think there may be gold down there. But on the other hand, it could just be a faulty machine." (San Diego Union-Tribune, 14/6/06. Spotter: Anon)

– o –

"The giant colon will be the star attraction at this years's agricultural expo, especially for children," Judy Gould of the Waikato/Bay of Plenty Cancer Society told a press conference at Mystery Creek. "It's a colossal colon, over twenty feet in length, which can be crawled through, or climbed over, or

walked around, so it's something the whole family can enjoy. And there are windows to peek through, to see how healthy colon tissue looks, as well as a demonstration of how the bowel works.

"But the giant colon has a serious purpose too. Bowel cancer is the second most common form of cancer in New Zealand, with about 2,400 people diagnosed each year, and the problem is worst amongst men. Bringing the colon to an agricultural show gives us an excellent place to raise the profile of men's health, and in particular bowel health. We hope that seeing a colon in action will persuade farming families of the importance of regular bowel checks. And it's fun to play with too." *(Waikato Times, 9/6/06. Spotter: John Monro)*


Apparently
BY MIKE BARFIELD
ANT AND DEC: THEIR 'POKER FACES'
SAME TOP CASH PRIZE AS 'MILLIONAIRE'...
SAME MUSIC AND LOOK AS 'WEAKEST LINK'...
SAME ELIMINATION CHATS WITH CONTESTANTS, TOO...
TIME FOR ANOTHER VISIT TO THE BANK...

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo!

And not "hullo, hullo, hullo", as our friend from Tesco keeps saying to me, whilst wearing a toy policeman's hat that was given away free with every six-pack of Smarties!

"That is not funny or clever, and you are just a Smarty-Pants!" I said to him, which actually is quite funny and clever, even though I say it myself!

" You could be arrested for impersonating a policeman," I went on, as he brought out a plastic truncheon, which had been given away free with a family-size packet of Frosties.

"And you," he replied, "could be arrested for impersonating a vicar."

He then disappeared behind a wall of lager cans marked with the cross of St George, which had been reduced to only 14p per dozen, laughing to himself as though he had said something funny or clever – which, as I said before, he hadn't.

Anyway, it just shows how easy it is for people to get the wrong end of the stick!

As it happens, I would have no problem with meeting members of our local police service, at any time, in any place, to discuss any number of topics they might wish to raise!

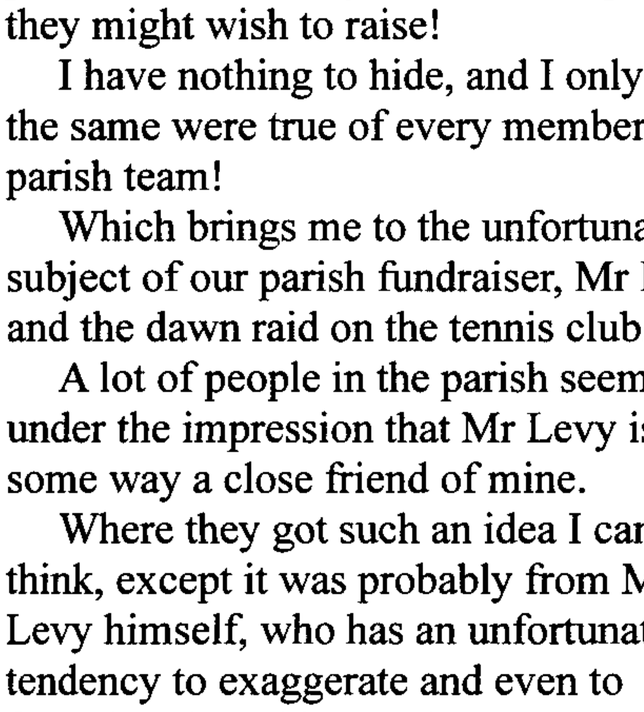
I have nothing to hide, and I only wish the same were true of every member of the parish team!

Which brings me to the unfortunate subject of our parish fundraiser, Mr Levy, and the dawn raid on the tennis club.

A lot of people in the parish seem to be under the impression that Mr Levy is in some way a close friend of mine.

Where they got such an idea I cannot think, except it was probably from Mr Levy himself, who has an unfortunate tendency to exaggerate and even to fantasise about his own importance (which may be what got him into his current sad predicament!).

Mr Levy has, I gather, been going round to local businesses, such as the High Noon Curry Emporium or Mr Patel's



The vicar decides to omit The Confession! As seen by local artist Mr de la Nougerede

Friary Clinic for enormously rich drug addicts and celebrities, tellling them that, if they hand over large sums of money, he can arrange favours for them from his friend the vicar! All I can say is that if such things ever happened, then certainly I never knew about it!

And if I did know about it, then I would remember it, which I don't!

I naturally feel very sorry for Mr Levy, and will, of course, visit him in prison, because that's what friends are for, as we are instructed to do in the Good Book *(Criminal Acts 9.7)*.

But let me make it clear once and for all that Mr Levy is not my friend and never has been.

I only met him once, when we played tennis together, and it was so long ago that I can remember nothing about it, except that Mr Levy made a number of dodgy line calls, which made me think at the time that he was probably not a man to be trusted!

And imagine my surprise later on when he was telling people that he was now leading our mission to the Holy Land!

Well, really! We all know that that's nothing to do with Mr Levy and that the only person whose advice I heed on the Middle East is the Rev. Dubya from the Church of the Latter-Day Morons.

Your friend, Tony

Bible Stories For Children

No. 94 The Scapegoat – taken from the *Book of Levy*

And in those days in the Holy Land, when someone important was caught out doing wrong, the people chose a goat and drove it out into the wilderness.

And they blamed the goat for all their wrongdoings. And eventually the goat died, which made everyone feel better.

The Vicar writes: What a relevant story this is today! I wonder if any of the children can think of a "goat" who deserves to be cast out into the wilderness today? Someone whose name begins with "L" and who thoroughly deserves all that's coming to him for falsely claiming that he is a friend of the vicar! T.B.

ROUND AND ABOUT

We all enjoyed Mr Prescott's recent parish talk in the Millennium Tent (now renamed The Fastbuck Casino). Mr Prescott spoke movingly about the great 19th century reformer William Wilberforce, who set people free to gamble. He told of how poor black people were chained to slot machines in Las Vegas and became even poorer. John was in fine form, and amused everyone by putting on a 10-gallon stetson that he had been given by Mr Fastbuck and pretending to be Clint Eastwood. In keeping with Mr Prescott's "Western" theme *(surely he was meant to be talking about Wilberforce? T.B.)*, the ladies, headed by Mrs Blears and Mrs Kelly, served appropriate refreshments, viz Tex-Mex Tacos, kindly provided by Mr Prescott's friend, Mr Fastbuck. Unfortunately, when it came to question time, Mr Humphrys rather spoiled it for everyone else by asking Mr Prescott several times about his private life and had to be asked to leave. T.B.

FROM THE OFFICE OF CHERIE BOOTH QC

There is a vile rumour doing the rounds of the parish that I pulled strings for the husband of my friend Mrs Greed (surely "Green"? Ed.), suggesting that Mr Greed's company, Healthy Profit Plc, should take over the cottage hospital.

Everyone should be warned that I do not intend to take this insult lying down (unlike the people in Mr Greed's hospitals). Anyone who is caught repeating the above slander will be liable to the full majesty of the law and will be issued with a writ of Scandalum Magnatum under the Terrorism Act 2006 and will be liable to be extradited to the state of Texas which, I should remind parishioners, still retains the Death Penalty for serious crimes.

Cherie Booth QC

PARISH NOTICES

I will be away next week, as I have been invited to El Porno in California by Mr Murdoch (owner of the Dirty Digger Books, Mags and Vids Warehouse in the High Street). I will be giving a sermon to Mr Murdoch's staff on the text "Blessed are the rich, for it pays to keep in with them" *(Sermon on the Mount of Venus)*.

I shall also be away next month, taking a well-earned break to "renew" my batteries for the years ahead! (Note the plural, Gordon!! Not year, but years!?!!) Mr Prescott, as usual, will be holding the fort in my absence. But, don't worry, John is a safe pair of hands, so long as he keeps them to himself!! (No offence, John!). T.B.

The Book of Ehud

Chapter 94

1. And it came to pass in the days when Ehud ruled the Land of Israel as Sharon lay sleeping in an coma that the Hamas-ites came privily by night and stole from the Israelites a soldier whose name was Shalit and led him away into captivity.
2. And Ehud counselled himself thus, saying.
3. "What shall I do? Shall I smite the Hamas-ites like unto Sharon? Or smite them an hundredfold also like unto Sharon?".
4. And he decided to go for the hundredfold option.
5. And so he sayeth unto the Children of Israel, "Gird up thy tanks and go forth into the Land of Gaza and smite everything you see until this captive is restored to us."
6. And they did even as Ehud commanded.
7. But, guesseth what? The captured soldier returneth not.
8. And, meanwhile, there was great wailing and gnashing of teeth in the Land of Gaza, which was turned into an wilderness fit only for the cockatrice and the ant.
9. Now there dwelt in the Land of Lebanon certain Hizboll-ites who did look upon the works of the Hamas-ites and sayeth one to another:
10. "What the Hamas-ites have done, let us do also. For it seemeth an good idea.
11. "For as sure as the noonday sun riseth over the Cedars of Lebanon, the Sons of Israel will be consumed by wrath and their judgement will leaveth from the window."
12. And it was even as the Hizboll-ites foretold.
13. They also crept privily by night *(see-eth above)* and led certain soldiers of Israel into captivity.
14. Then Ehud waxed exceeding wroth, like unto the hornet when a man whacketh it with his flip-flop.
15. And Ehud again took counsel with himself *(see-eth above again)*.
16. And, lo, yet again he reasoned that smiting was the only answer, but this time it would be an thousandfold.
17. So he commanded the Israelites: "Go forth unto the Land of Lebanon and lay it waste like unto Gaza, except more so, for these people learneth not their lesson.
18. "Unlike myself."
19. And so it came to pass and the Israelites smote the Hizboll-ites, and they smote back at the cities of the Israelites and meanwhile the Hamas-ites did some smiting as well.
20. And the Hamas-ites and Hizboll-ites rejoiced, saying "It worketh every time."
21. But Ehud hearkeneth not, and sayeth unto himself:
22. "Perhaps I should extend the smiting to the Syrian-ites and then the Iran-ites and all the rest of the Arab-ites.
23. "Until there is no one left to smite.
24. "And then the children of Israel may dwell in peace. Just as our forefathers didn't."

(To be continued throughout history)

NEW JOB FOR MIDDLE EAST ENVOY

MY DINNER WITH LORD LEVY

by Dominic Lawson

I was lucky enough to be invited to dinner by Lord Levy who is a very nice man and very important! He has a big house with lots of nice things in it. And they're all white. Amazing!

Anyway there were lots of really important people at the dinner party as well as myself. There was the Head of MI5, the Governor of the Bank of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury (I think or maybe it was the Duke of Kent), the First Lord of the Admiralty, Sir David Frost and Lord Rees-Mogg.

It was really interesting and then guess what? The telephone rang and Lord Levy answered it, whispering to us: "It's Tony". Everyone was most impressed. Imagine the Prime Minister ringing up a party where I was, surrounded by famous people. Surely that is proof that Lord Levy is innocent?

© Read Dominic Lawson only in the Independent, the Mail and everywhere else.

"Grandma's for two weeks, summer camp for two weeks, scouts one week, soccer skills one week, stay with friends one week... See you in September"

ADVERTISEMENT

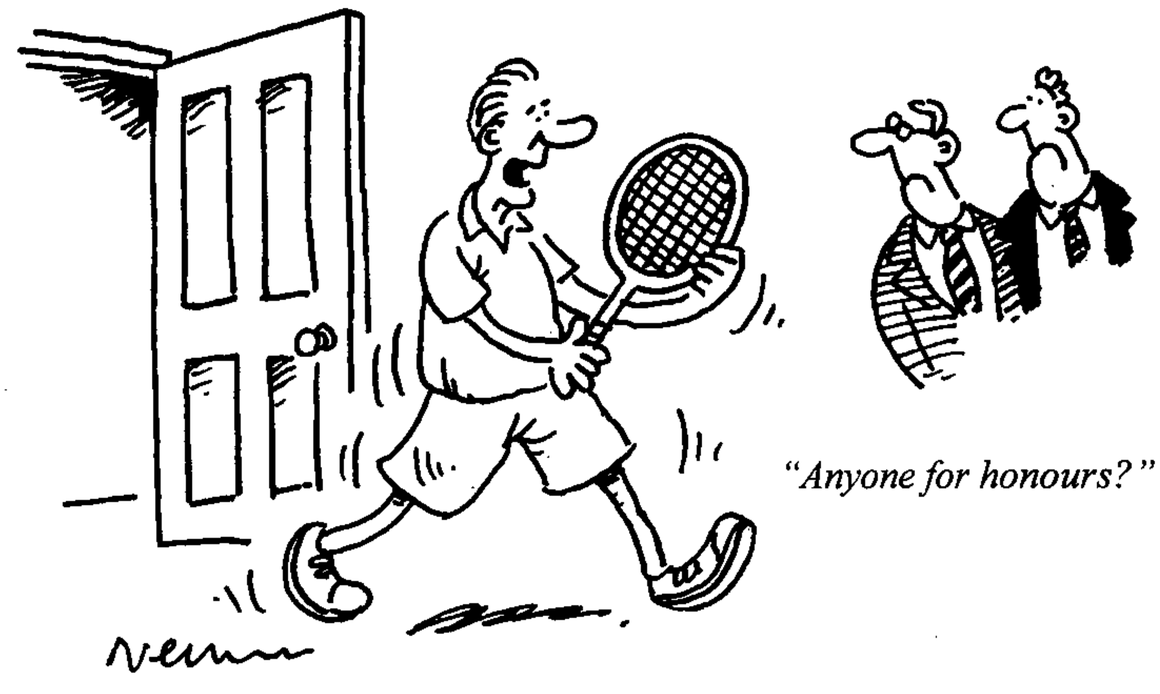
CLASSIC DVDs FROM GNOME

FIDDLER ON THE PRISON ROOF

starring
Topol as Lord Levy
with the unforgettable
hit song

"If you were a rich man
Would you like a peerage?"

ORDER YOUR COPY NOW!



"Anyone for honours?"

THAT G8 COMMUNIQUE IN FULL

1. We wish to urge restraint on all sides, particularly on ourselves.

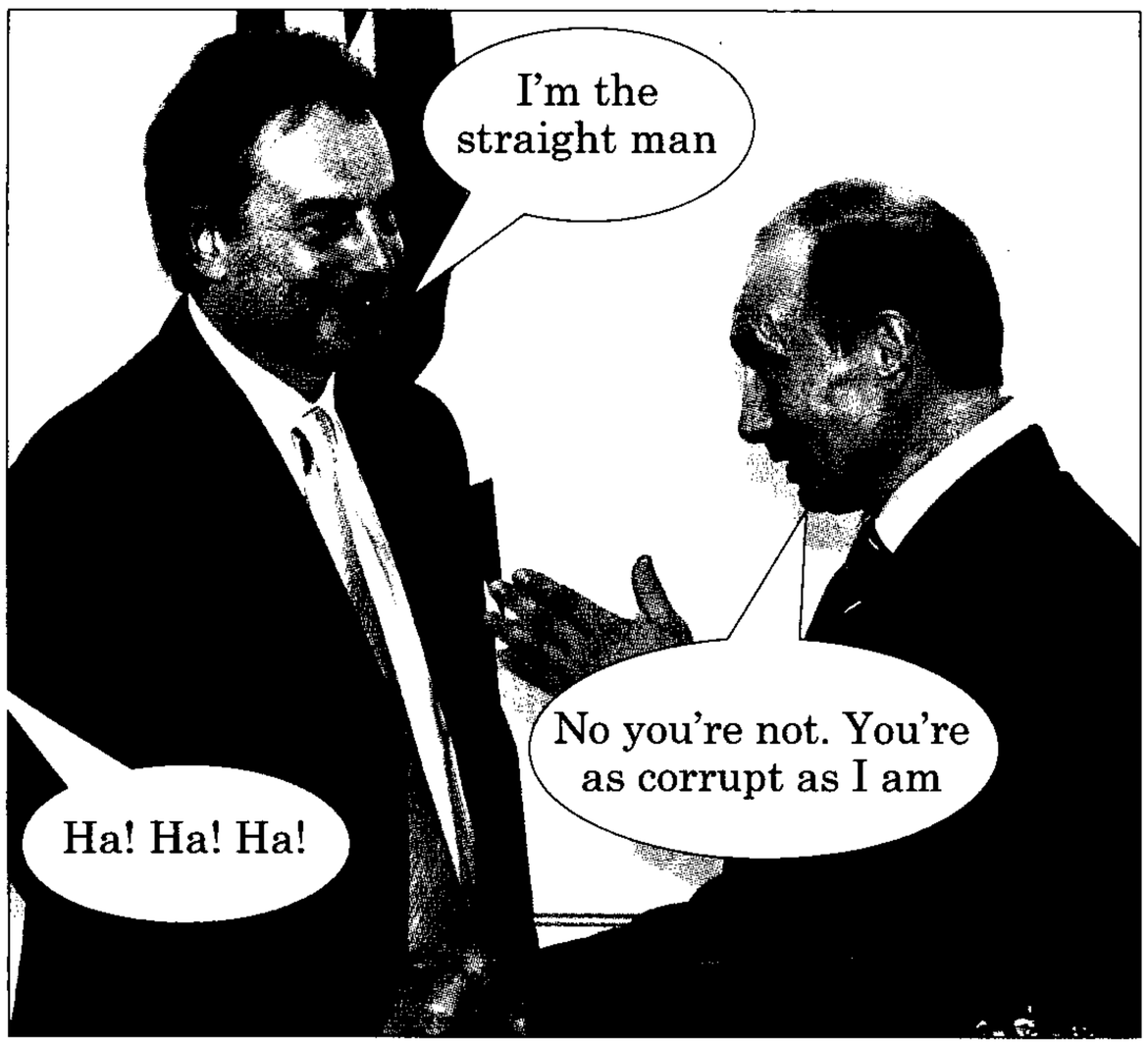
2. It would be all too easy for us to overreact and for the G8 to suggest some positive policies for the Middle East.

3. We must therefore not be too hasty and rush into action. It would be much better to show restraint and do nothing at all.

4. When's dinner?

© G8

G8 – NEW COMEDY DOUBLE ACT LAUNCHED



'WE WERE WRONG ABOUT EVERYTHING' ADMITS BLAIR

by Our Political Staff **Peter O'Bore**

THE PRIME Minister last night launched an unprecedented attack on the Government, describing all its policies as "complete rubbish".

"Let's start," he said, "with ID Cards. What a farce that idea has turned out to be! Whoever came up with that one should be ashamed of themselves.

"Merging the police forces? Did you ever hear anything so daft in your life?

"Human Rights Act? What a load of liberal, lefty rubbish!

"Home Information Packs? A completely crackpot scheme – even an idiot could see that wouldn't work."

When Mr Blair was asked whether there was anything he was in favour of, he replied, "Yes, of course. Nuclear power, Marvellous. Can't get enough of it. Gifted children? Why shouldn't they have their own schools? Mrs Thatcher? Don'tchaloveher? She should have a State Funeral, no question. Best prime minister we've had since myself."

At this point, two parliamentary advisers in white coats escorted Mr Blair to a quiet room, where he was later reported to be "in an unstable condition".

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam June Allyson, Film Actress

So. Farewell then
June Allyson.

You were
In lots of films
But we best
Remember you
As Glenn Miller's
Wife in *The Glen Miller* Story.

All together now
(If you're in the mood)
Da-di-di-da-di-di
Da-di-di-da-di-di
(Repeat)

E. J. Thribb (78 rpm)

WAYNE ROONEY 'My Life So Far'

(as told to Hoonter Davies)

Chapter One I was born and started to play football.

Chapter Two I went to school and played football.

Chapter Three I became a footballer and played football.

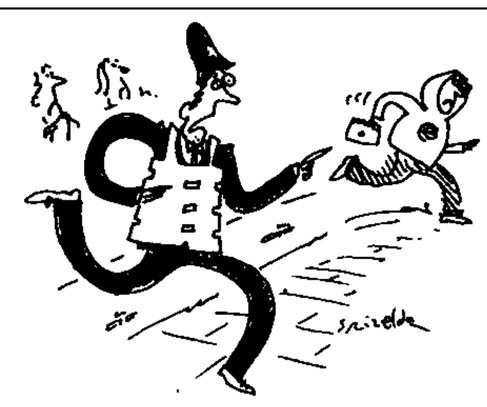
Chapter Four Er...

Chapter Five That's it.

Tomorrow: The spud-faced nipper tells the behind-the-scenes story of how famous author Hoonter turns this stuff into a whole book.

THOSE CAMERON POLICIES

- **Hoodies are nice...**
- **Unless they listen to violent rap music. Then they're not nice.**
- **Unless the violent rap music is played on an environmentally-friendly CD player. Then they're nice.**
- **Unless the environmentally-friendly CD has been stolen by a filthy Hoodie. Then they're not.**

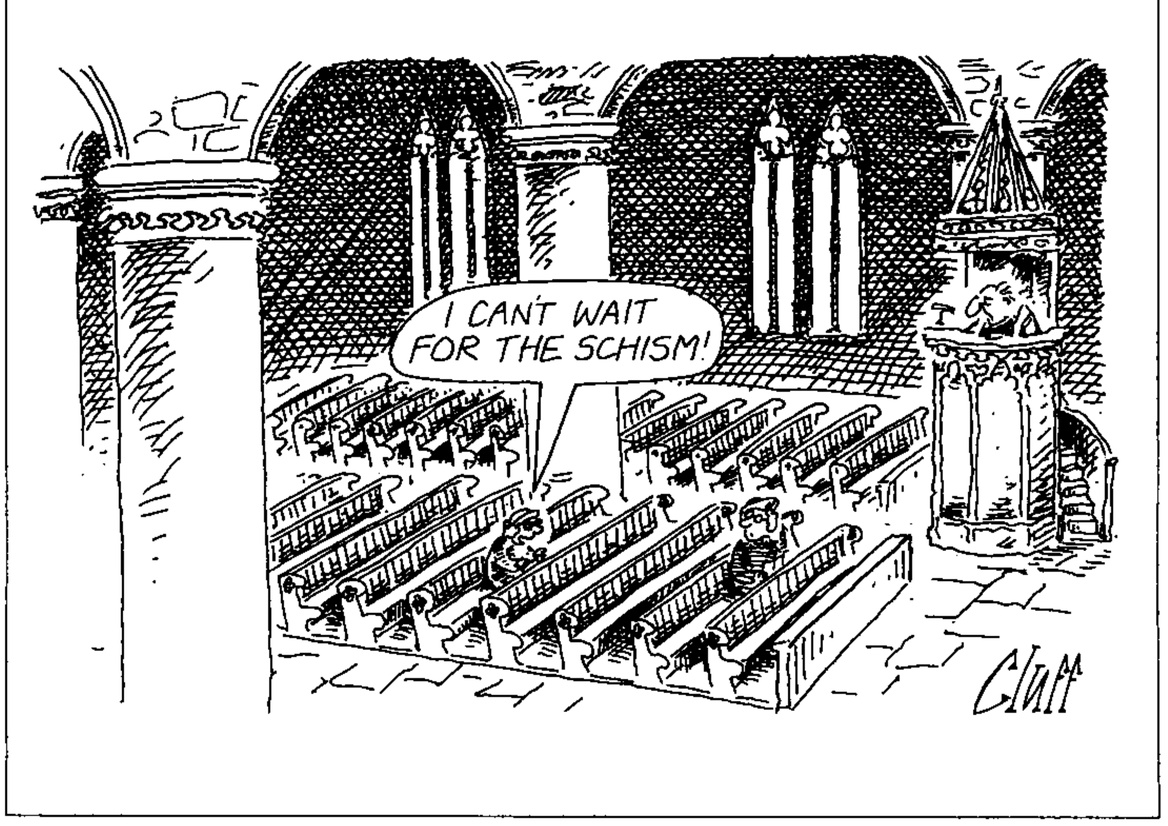


"Hug that thief!"

DICTIONARY CORNER

Indicative (adj) Deliberately falsified. Eg, *"The costs that were in the Olympic bid were indicative costs."* Tessa Jowell, July 2006

Discussing Wilberforce (participle and proper noun) Having a free holiday. Eg, *"John Prescott was discussing Wilberforce with Mr Anschutz."* Govt. spokesman, July 2006



The Daily Telegraph

Cash for Honours Scandal

The news that Lord Levy has been arrested in connection with the Labour loan inquiry raises profoundly disturbing questions about the role of the Prime Minister and Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha

© *The Daily Telegraph*

EXCLUSIVE TO PRIVATE EYE

That Ghulam Noon Loan Form In Full

Application For Membership Of The House of Lords

HoL 246B

Name GHULAM NOON

Address THE STAR OF HINDUJA

BALTI HOUSE, NEASDEN

Postcode NW10

Occupation CURRY VENDOR

Title Sought LORD GHULAM OF TANDOORI

Details of Crest TWO SAMOSAS RAMPANT ON A BED OF PILAU RICE

Motto CURRY ON REGARDLESS

Amount Offered *(must be not less than £250,000)* £250.000

Does this include service? *(Yes/No)* YES

Is it **(a)** a loan or **(b)** a gift? *(answer a)* A

If a loan, when would repayment be required? (a) this year; (b) *next year*; (c) sometime; (d) never *(answer d)* D

You are now very close to becoming a Lord. Just fill in your credit card details below:

Mastercard/Visa/Access/Indian Express

2221 3332 4445 1234

Read through this form carefully, and if you don't wish to receive any publicity for having tried to buy a peerage, tick this box ☑

Then send completed form in plain brown envelope to: Government Peerage Offer, c/o Lord Levy, 10 Downing Street, London SW1

BBC DEFENDS MANAGEMENT PAY RISES

THE BBC has strongly defended the £150,000 pay-rise awarded to Steven Haircut, the Corporation's Director of Stationery Procurement (paperclips and A4 envelopes), which takes his total pay package to £736,000 a year .

"If we don't pay these sort of salaries then unique talent like Steven will be lost to the commercial sector, where they will use the expertise gained at the BBC to ensure that every stationery cupboard at ITV headquarters is fully stocked with paperclips and A4 envelopes, stationery that could have been benefiting the licence fee payer.

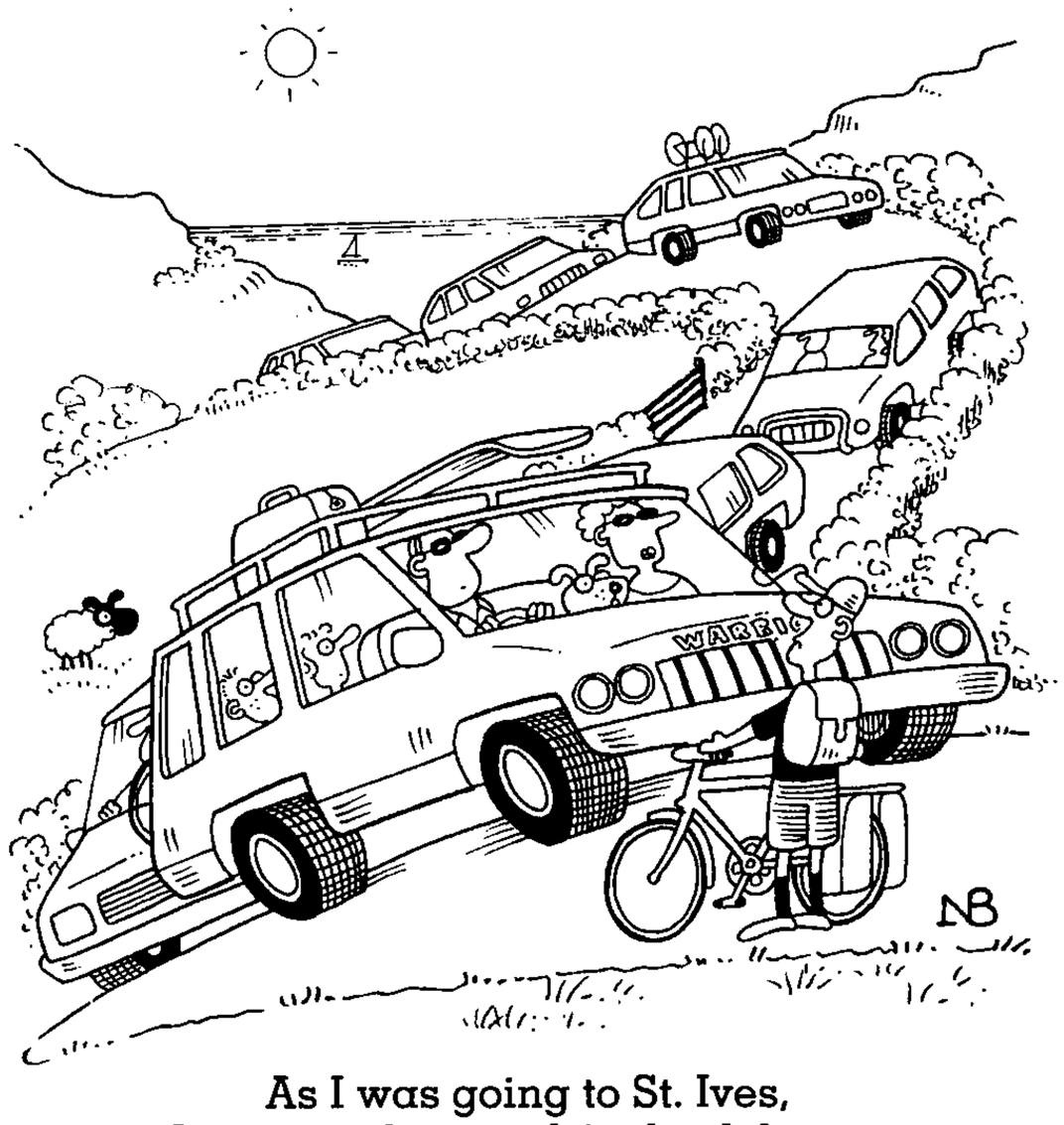
"This is a risk we simply aren't prepared to take."

Wedding of the Century

How They Are Related

Old King Cole	Tweedie Dum
Nat King Cole	Tweedie Dee
Samuel Taylor Cole	Tweedie Pie
John 'Hondootedly' Cole	Sylvester the Cat
Helmut Kohl	Christopher Sylvester
Cole Porter	Jill Tweedie
David Cole-man	Harris Tweedie
Ashley Scoles	Cheryl Baker
Joe Cole	**Cheryl Blair**

MODERN NURSERY RHYMES



As I was going to St. Ives,
I saw ten thousand 4-wheel drives.

Let's Parlez Franglais!

Lesson 94 **l'Apologie** avec Zizou Zidane

Zizou *(pour c'est lui)*: Naturellement je regrette beaucoup si mon 'head-butt' dans le World Cup (devant dix billion de viewers dans leur fauteils autour de la entire monde) est un mauvais example for les kiddies. Mais, franchement, je ne regrette rien and je refuse totalement de faire un apologie a ce batard Maserati, qui est un bit of un poof, excusez mon francais!

M. Le President Chirac *(parce que c'est lui)*: Mon brave, vous êtes le plus grand Frenchman dans notre histoire (sauf que moi, naturellement). Acceptez la legion d'honneur premiere classe. Vous êtes un vrai role model pour tous les kiddies francaises, noir et blanc, riche et pauvre, les Chrêtiens et les Moslems comme vous qui set fire aux banlieus de Paris chaque semaine....

Zizou: Voici un head-butt for you, M. le President, aussi. *(BIFF)*

Chirac: Ouch! Vive la France! À bas les Eyeties!

DAILY GNOME EXCLUSIVE

Revealed: the insult that made Zinedine Zidane see red in the world cup final

THE Daily Gnome can exclusively reveal exactly what was said to the French captain that led to him head-butting the Italian defender Marco Materazzi.

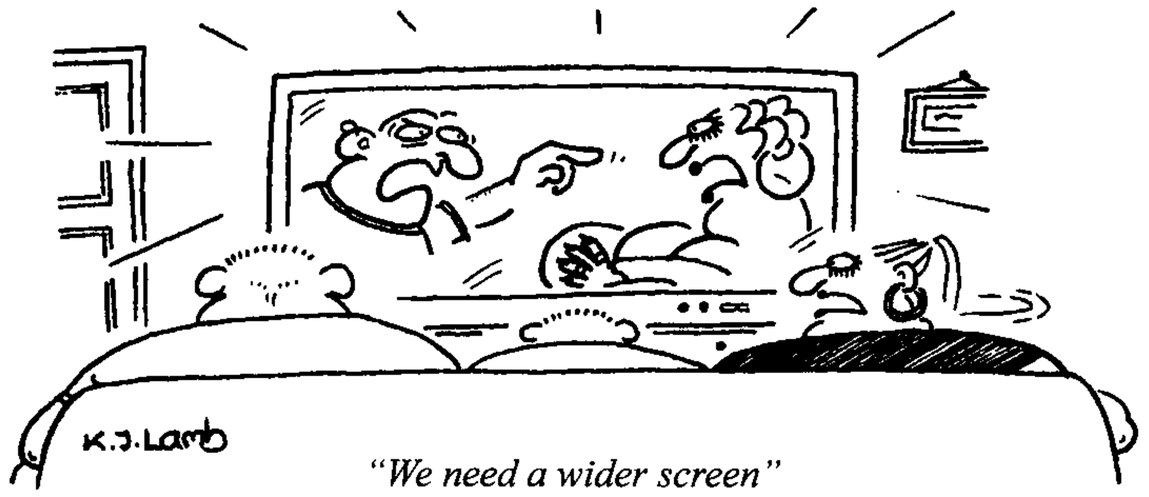
"A lip-reading expert consulted by the Daily Gnome is certain Zidane was told 'Sven Goran Eriksson says you are good enough to play in the England team'.

"No wonder he flipped his lid."

GREEK TRAGEDY NEVER HAD ANYTHING LIKE THIS

by the Eye's Chief Sports Writer **Halftime O'Booze**

A TRAGEDY of Epicurean proportions engulfed one of soccer's all-time living legends last night, toppling him from the very pinnacle of Olympus to the bottomless pit of Stygian ignominy, in a drama which can only be described as truly Shakespearian in its revelation of a flawed superhuman hero who is brought low by a single reckless act of self-destructive hubris. What possessed this modern deity, worshipped by millions as a demi-god of truly iconic status, to *(cont. p. 94)*



"We need a wider screen"

EXCLUSIVE TO THE SUN!

SHAMEFUL PUBLICITY SEEKER IN PATHETIC 'DI QUICKIE' CLAIMS

THE SUN today condemns TV cameraman Sebastian Rich's sleazy attempt to whip up publicity for himself with tawdry claims that he had a 'quickie' with Princess Diana.

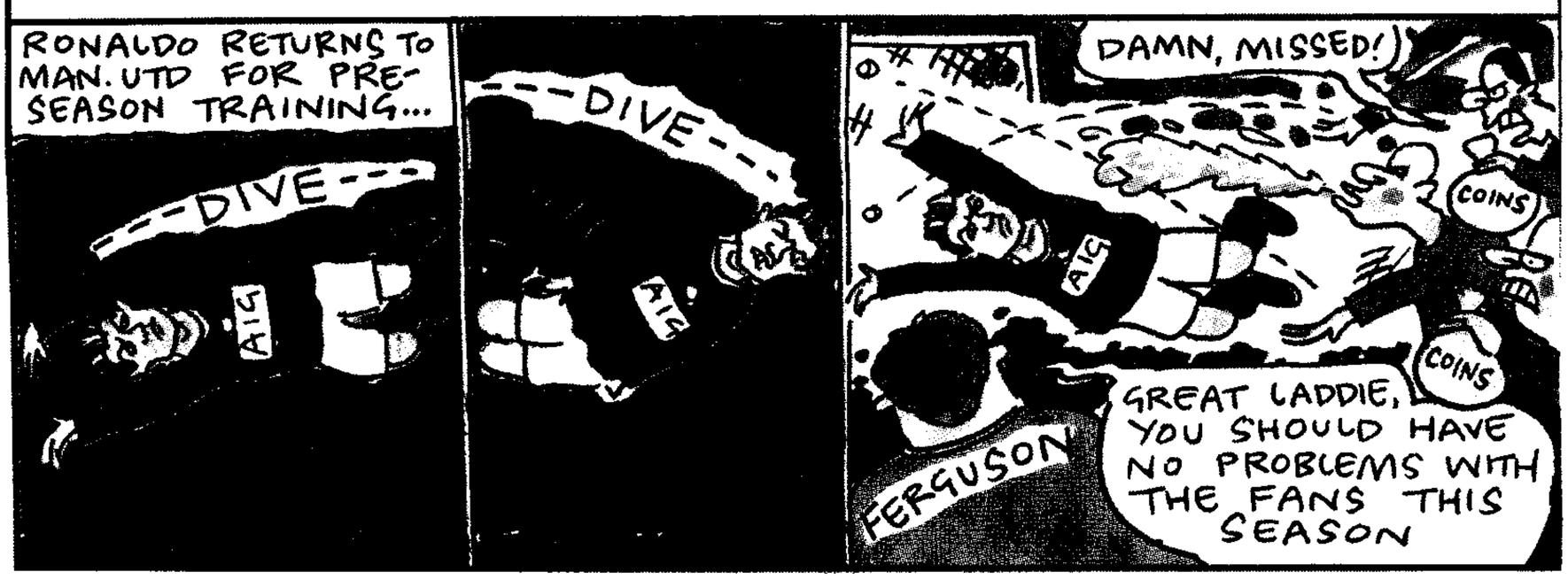
We are so disgusted by his claims to have had sex with the Princess that we have had no choice but to splash his story all over the front page and three inside pages, and to run a four-page interview with Mr Rich, interviews with his ex-lovers and a 'Deidre's Photo Casebook' detailing exactly how their sexual liaison could have taken place.

LATE NEWS

BUCKINGHAM Palace has dismissed as 'ludicrous and nonsensical' claims by an amateur botanist, Prince Charles, that he slept with Princess Diana in 1986 in a quickie lasting two and a half minutes.

"It's well known that at the time Princess Diana was sleeping with James Hewitt, half the Coldstream Guards, the Birmingham City reserve team, two units of the SAS, three ITV cameramen, and Denis Healey's Spitting Image puppet, so she would hardly have had time to be having sex with this strange man," said a Palace *(cont. p. 94)*

the PREMIERSH*TS



Every Summer since the magic death of Diana, Princess of Wales in 1997, her childhood home at Althorp has opened its doors to thousands of visitors.

Advertisement, Uttoxeter Advertiser

A DESERTED husband who became fixated that his wife may have left him for another woman smashed his way into the house where she was living with a crowbar.

Hertfordshire on Sunday

DAILY HIS-TORYGRAPH

Friday, July 21, 2006

That Honorary Degree Citation In Full

SALUTAMUS GUILLIEMUS CONNOLLIUS COMEDIANUS CALEDONENSIS APPELLATUS MAGNUS YINNUS NATO IN GORBALIBUS LABORIO NAUTICO CONSTRUCTIONEM MAESTRO BANJOENSIS LUDENTUM CUM BARBUM MULTICOLORUM RIDICULOSUM ET ACCENTIUS GLASWEGIANUS IMPENETRABILE SED FREQUENTER APPARATIO IN PROGRAMMUS TELEVISUALIS PARKINSONIUS CUM MULTI JOCULARI CRUDUS PER EXEMPLO 'FARTUM' 'BUMMEN' 'WILLYIUM' ET CETERA ET CETERA. MARITUS AD PAMELAM STEVENSONIAM COMEDIANA ANTIPODEANA ET SUBSEQUENTER PSYCHOTHERAPISTICUM DRIVELLIANA IN CALIFORNIA IN NOVO MUNDO SED POST HAEC TRIUMPHES NIHIL IMPORTANTUS EXCEPTIONE ADVERTUS PISSPORRUS PER LOTTO NATIONALE CUM SLOGANO PISSPOORISSIMO 'NON VIVO PARVO, VIVO LOTTO'. GAUDEAMUS!

© The Royal Scottish Academy Of Music And Drama, Glasgow (formerly Mrs McNaughtie's School Of Elocution And Deportment, over McHackey's Chippie, 231a Sauchiehall Street – "Scotch Tapas At Its Best".

Sheriff Of Notting Hill In Policy U-Turn

by Will "Scarlet" Deedes

IN AN astonishing reversal of traditional Conservative thinking, the Sheriff of Notting Hill has called for society to be more understanding towards Robin Hoodie.

The Men In Green

"What Hoodie needs is love and compassion, not being hunted through the forest and hung from the nearest tree."

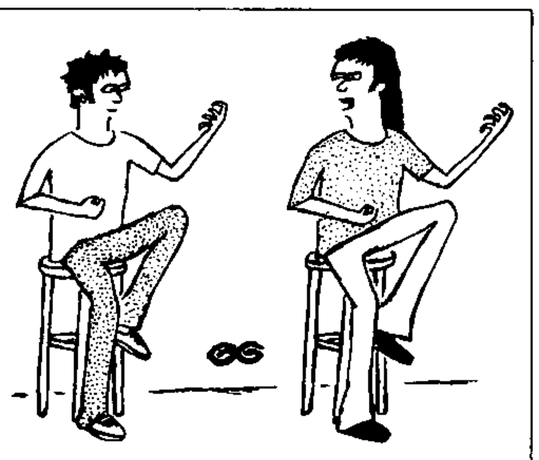
Sir David of Cameron continued: "Sure, Hoodie goes around breaking the law, stealing from the rich and frightening the elderly as they travel around Middle England.

"But it's no good outlawing Hoodie and trying to ban him from shopping centres in Notting Hill.

"Instead, we've got to make him feel included in our society. After all, men in suits of armour probably seem pretty threatening to him."

Sheriff Cameron is 39.

DESPERATE JOHN
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A COWBOY, READERS
SALOON
WELL, PARDNER, HERE'S A HAT, A BELT AND SOME BOOTS!
I CAN CERTAINLY FILL MY BOOTS!
DONE ON THE RANGE
AND HERE'S SOMETHING TO GET YOUR LEG OVER!
IS THAT A NOT-VERY-BIG GUN IN YOUR POCKET OR ARE YOU JUST PLEASED TO SEE ME?
I'M HUNGRY! WHAT ABOUT SOME COW PIE?
NO, JOHN, IT'S PORK PIES FOR YOU FROM NOW ON!
NOW I REALLY AM A COWBOY!
YES SIREE! SOMEONE WHO DOES THE JOB BADLY AND CLEARS OFF LEAVING A MESS BEHIND!
TEE HEE! TEE HEE!
KP



"Spanish air guitar isn't as much fun as rock"

THE NATWEST THREE

The Daily Telegraph answers your questions

What Will Happen To the NatWest Three When They Land In America?

ONCE the plane lands in Houston, Texas, the three bankers will be placed in shackles and leg-irons and transported straight to a maximum-security prison, where they will be brutalised by sadistic prison guards and then forced to work nineteen hours a day in the blistering mid-day heat on a chain-gang breaking rocks before being goaded into participating in ritualistic "egg-eating" contests with fellow prisoners such as Paul Newman.

Will They Be 'Burnt' If Found Guilty?

FEVERISH speculation amongst Daily Telegraph hacks grew that, much like the women wrongly convicted of being witches at the Salem Witch Trials in 1692, the NatWest Three bankers will be burnt at the stake if found guilty by American prosecutors.

Though no one has been burnt at the stake for over 300 years, legal experts say that it's almost certain that *(cont. p. 94)*

Are the NatWest Three Suffering 'Family Heartache'?

ONE of the three merchant bankers who has been extradited to America on fraud charges has spoken of his fears that he won't see his wife and children for a whole year.

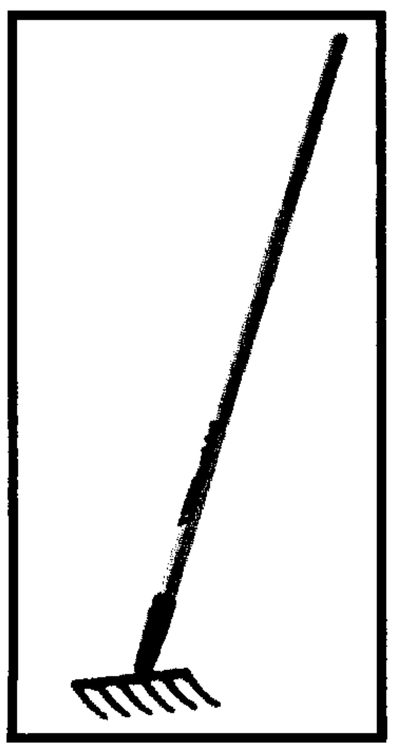
"This will be just like being back at work in the Square Mile all over again," he said.

Are the NatWest Bankers 'Innocent'?

THE NatWest Three have already been found innocent by a jury of twelve good Telegraph hacks and true. This should be enough for anyone.

On Other Pages ● Pictures of NatWest Three cuddling children and stroking kittens; ● No pictures of NatWest Three cuddling vast amounts of money they allegedly made from the Enron deal.

KEIRA WOWS FANS AT PIRATES PREMIERE



YES, Keira Knightley looked fabulous last night as she posed for pictures on the red carpet!

The star of the new 'Pirates Of The Caribbean' blockbuster happily chatted to fans and signed autographs at the glittering opening of the movie phenomenon of the year.

However, lovely Keira did confess that she had a weight problem. "Maybe I need to lose a few pounds," she laughed, as *(cont. p. 94)*

POLLY FILLER

IT'S the big debate! Can an alpha female live with a gamma male? Can a high-flying successful columnist and best-selling authoress (*Your Mummy Or Your Wife! Despatches From The Domestic Warzone*, Pearson Johnson Tyrell £15.99) co-habit successfully with a useless partner who earns less than she does and spends all day watching Pro-Celebrity Nude Shopping Trolley Racing from Bluewater on Sky Extra More Plus Now Again, presented by Richard Hammond and Russell Brand?

It's a tricky one and, as an alpha plus woman stuck with a bloke who would be hard-pressed to qualify as a zeta minus male, it's something I've had to think about!

THE answer is that these relationships *can* work, but it has to be a real partnership. It takes two people to ensure a successful team. Me and the au-pair. An alpha woman and a gamma woman, who knows that her menial role is absolutely vital and that were she to mistake the capuccino machine for the steam iron and serve up Simon's underpants in a cup of coffee, she would be sent straight back to what remains of Gaza City! (A hilarious anecdote which appears in my forthcoming Christmas compendium, *The Polly In The Ivy*!)

That's the secret, girls. Give and take! I give the orders to the au-pair and she takes good care not to be fired! Allowing gamma male to do what he's good at, ie nothing.

© *Polly Filler 2006.*

THE TEHRAN TIMES

FRIDAY, 21 JULY 2006

Mounting Alarm As Blair Says 'We Go Nuclear'

BY OUR MAN IN LONDON **AHMINADINAJAKT**

TONY BLAIR, the mad dictator of Britain, yesterday defied world opinion by insisting that his country will "go nuclear" within five years.

For months, critics across the globe have urged the British leader to think again about his nuclear ambitions.

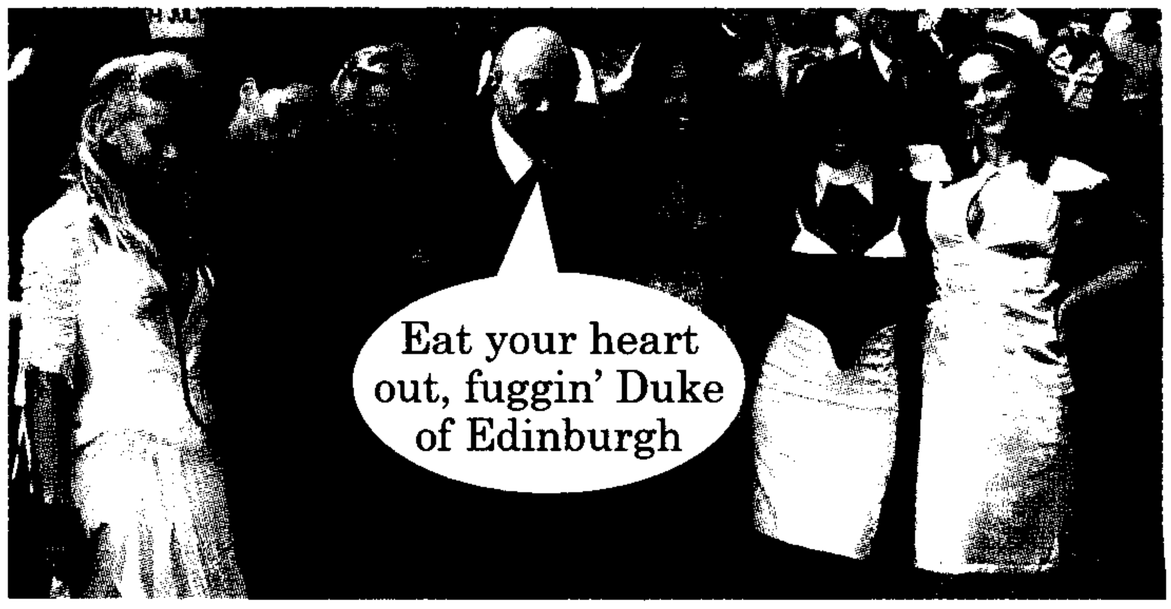
"This is sheer madness," said one of Blair's most vociferous opponents. "If he goes ahead, this will destabilise the entire region."

But the increasingly crazed English prime minister insisted, "Other countries have gone nuclear – why shouldn't we?

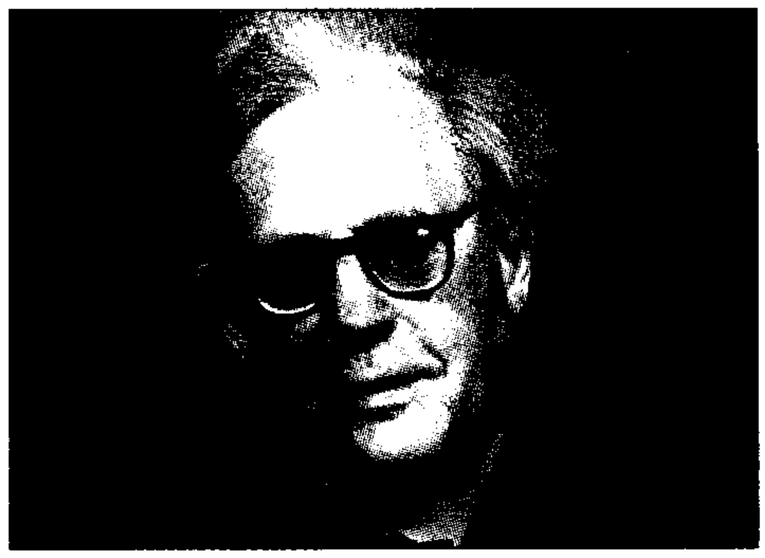
"No one's going to tell me how to run my country – except Mr Bush obviously."

ON OTHER PAGES ● Is Black The New Black? by Our Fashion Correspondent Michael Buerka **6** ● Unfunny Cartoon by Mahmoud **7** ● Your Executions Tonight **10** ● Koran Still No. 1 In Bestseller List **12**

FAYED MEETS THE PUSSYCAT DOLLS



DIARY



LETTERS FROM OXFORD

Hugh Trevor-Roper to Bernard Berenson

18 July 1956

My dear BB,

I must apologise, *inter alia*, for my tiresome silence. I have now emerged from *les horreurs de la* term, a pleasing respite, and one that allows me time to devote a generous portion of my thankfully not inconsiderable intellect to the service of this, our most deliciously civilised correspondence.

It was whilst walking round the Christ Church Meadow, and pondering on the complicated subtleties of St Augustine's theological system, which I had long tried to take seriously, though to little avail (for St Augustine was, frankly, a second-rater, perhaps even a third-rater), that the undoubted truth came upon me that my erstwhile colleague A.L. Rowse is singularly ill-suited to the teaching or writing of history, being dwarfish and plebeian. There is neither breadth nor depth to him, and precious little width or height.

On my return to my study, I set in motion a plot to discredit the oikish Cornish charlatan. Creeping along the corridor on tip-toe, I eased open his door the merest half-inch, deftly placing an open bottle of black ink of the darkest hue on its uppermost surface before tip-toeing back down the corridor again. The entire operation was o'er in something less than a minute.

Within seconds of the dinner-bell sounding, I awaited the tell-tale creak of Rowse's door with the keenest anticipation. Sure enough, when it came it was accompanied by a high-pitched – almost feminine – howl of quasi-scholarly anguish. I counted to ten before nipping out into the corridor. "My dear Leslie!" I exclaimed, surveying this woebegone figure, covered from head to foot in the blackest ink. "The true scholar always guards against the overloading of his fountain pen!"

Needless to say, the sight of poor little drenched Leslie at luncheon convinced my colleagues that it would be highly inappropriate for him to be granted a Fellowship, from which those of the Negro persuasion are sadly disbarred. *C'est*, as the untrustworthy French have it, *la vie*. Discussing the episode later with three of Oxford's keenest intellects, we found ourselves in complete agreement that Rowse had brought it on himself. "If one insists on pushing open doors upon which ink has previously been placed, one must surely be obliged to make an accommodation with the consequences" I observed, sagely. "St Augustine may have been a jejune and undistinguished *boulevardier*, but he at least taught us that much."

I visited France last week: a disappointing country, with nothing and no-one to detain one for more than a few minutes.

24 August 1956

My dear BB.

Forgive my epistolary dilatoriness, but I have been dealing with an uprising of Scottish theologians within the university. Thankfully, we shall hear no more from them, for I have crushed them like snails underfoot. As a matter of general philosophy, I have long ago come to the conclusion that in all doubtful situations it pays to eradicate without mercy. And I might add that Jesus Christ, that singularly ill-kempt individual upon whose every ignominious word they so dutifully hang, was notably panicky, ill-educated and generally uncongenial.

I have a young friend and colleague, Dr Hannibal Lecter, an art scholar who will shortly be journeying to Italy. I have taken the liberty of telling him to telephone you when in Florence. I think you would find him a most attractive character: sometimes caustic, even somewhat snappy, yes, but with an appreciation of art, an almost ravenous impatience with the intellectually insignificant and something of a genius for the culinary arts. We had him to dine here at Christ Church last week, and he proved a huge success. He even cooked us the most magnificent college banquet, serving-dishes laden with the juiciest and most tender legs, breasts and what-have-you. Thoughtlessly, two or three or our most tedious lower-middle-class dons whom I had earlier presented to Lecter chose that evening to "go missing", and have – most happily! – not been sighted since.

June 4th 1957

My dear BB,

You ask me to tell you about the cat which sat on the mat: was he, perchance, a feline of any real distinction, and did his chosen sitting-arrangements prove acceptable to himself and others? There is little, I fear, to say on the matter, or, to put it another way, on the matter, there is, I fear, little to say – or, indeed, *upon* which to remark, other than that he was most assuredly a cat, and that the mat upon which he felt inclined to place himself was as inhererently mattish as one might have supposed.

Little is known for sure about the cat in question. Cats are, in my experience, ill-suited to the rigour of an ancient University; their conversation, being little more than a relentless succession of overblown miaows, invariably fails to excite or to scintillate. It is, I would add, hard to think of a cat of one's acquaintance who exhibits any real intellectual distinction. Much has been made in recent months of the Cat in the Hat, but, for all his self-publicising bravado, he has done little, to my mind, to justify the immense claims made for him by his mentor, Dr Seuss; I would add only that the cat's idiotic grin, his chronic fidgetiness, his ungainly headwear and his reluctance to sit still all militate against his suitability for an academic post of any significance. But is the Cat in the Hat related to the Cat on the Mat? Might they, perhaps, be one and the same? These are the questions reputable historians will be tempted to ask over a bottle of hock for many centuries to come.

You ask for any gossip from Oxford about the wider world, if there is such a thing. I am reliably informed that the USA is going downhill. For all its talk of "sky-scrapers" and – heaven forfend – "big bucks", I have it on good authority that it will soon be roughly on a par, socially, economically and intellectually, with the Isle of Wight.

At this time of year, the roses are in bloom. They invariably disappoint, smell unctuous, and have little to say for themselves.

Yours ever,
Hugh

As told to
CRAIG BROWN

Celeb

LIGGER

DAD, THANKS FOR AGREEING TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED WITH ME RUNNING FOR SPORT RELIEF.
I'LL DO ANYTHING TO HELP YOUR CAREER, PIXIE.
SPORT RELIEF
IT'S GREAT. YOU GET ONE RED SOCK BEFORE THE MILE RUN AND ONE WHEN YOU FINISH.
WE READY TO GO THEN?
SPORT RELIEF
DAD, YOU'VE FORGOTTEN YOUR SOCK.
OOPS. THANKS, PIXIE...
SPORT RELIEF
AS I SAID, ANYTHING TO HELP YOUR CAREER...
SPORT RELIEF
TUCK
BULGE

Literary Review

Art attack

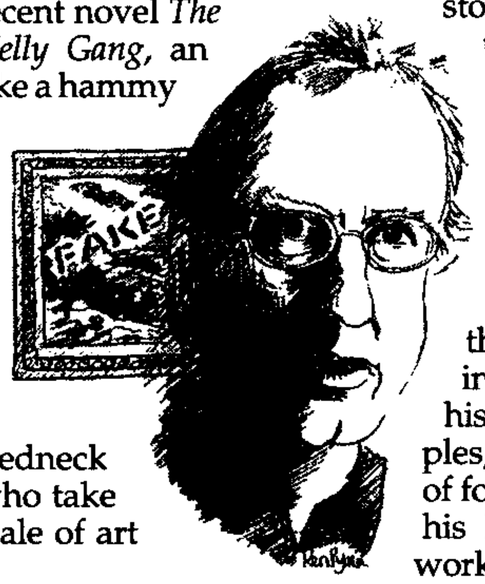
Theft

Peter Carey

(Faber, £16.99)

"THE problem with art is the people who buy it." Peter Carey is so incensed at the fashions, fakes and frauds of the international art market he has made it the subject of his latest novel. The problem is that, like his last book, *Wrong About Japan* (see *Eye* 1125), it basically just affirms all your existing prejudices.

It's also, like his recent novel *The True History of the Kelly Gang*, an Impersonation Job. Like a hammy old method actor (or indeed like the painter he describes preparing to forge a fake), Carey works himself up for the "part". Or in this case two parts: the brawny Boone brothers, sons of a redneck Australian butcher, who take turns to narrate this tale of art world chicanery.



Michael Boone, known as Butcher Bones, is (or was) a famous artist. Acrimoniously divorced, his best work sequestered as "marital assets", he rants and rages against the iniquities that have brought him low and swears vengeance on the phoney world of dealers and collectors who now regard him as a has-been. His brother, Slow Bones, is an idiot-savant, whose tangential contributions consist of rambling monologues full of CAPITALISED WORDS and bodily eructations: phthaaa! Between them the brothers spin a convoluted yarn about missing artworks, fraudulent misattributions, forgery, theft and, eventually, murder.

Leading them by the nose (or, in Michael's case, dick) from upstate New South Wales, to Sydney, to Japan (why not? we've done the research) and finally New York in the early 1980s, is a mercurial femme fatale called Marlene.

She is the daughter-in-law of a great painter, Jacques Liebovitz, who also happens to be Michael's artistic hero. She has come to rural New South Wales, where Michael has set up studio in a friend's borrowed house, to authenticate one of Liebovitz's paintings, which just happens to belong to Michael's neighbour.

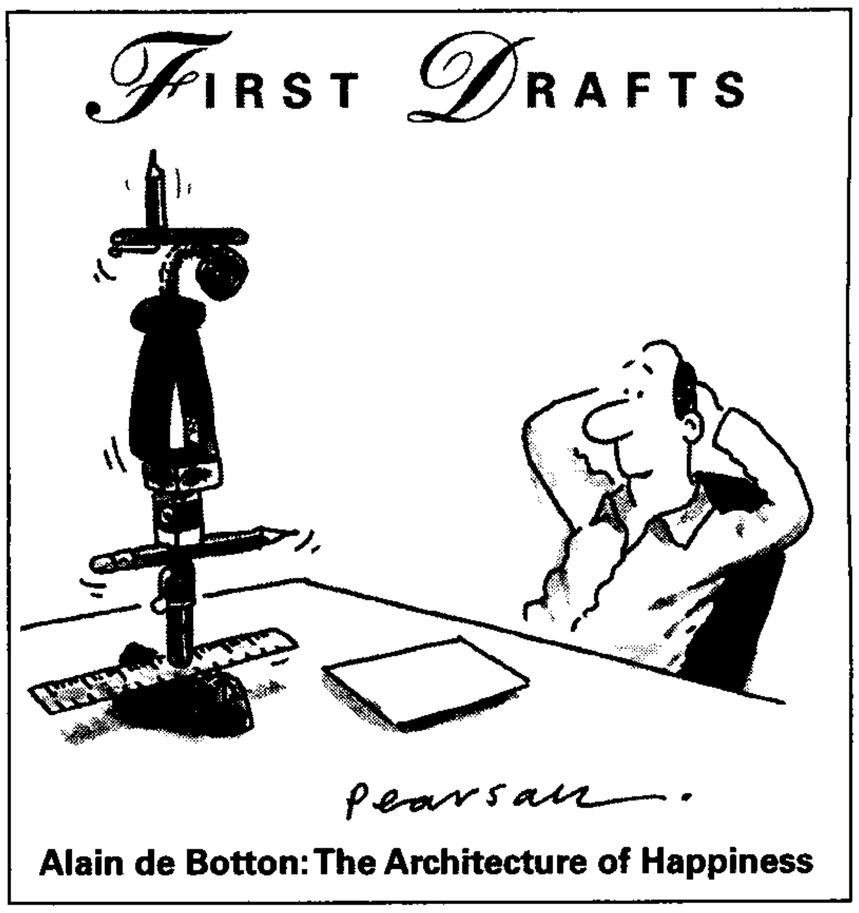
So far, so coincidental. Then the painting goes missing. The police seem to think Michael is involved. Marlene turns out to have a "warm little pussy" and a cold, calculating mind, and Michael is so besotted with the first that he chooses to ignore the second. While ranting and raving about the police, lawyers, art dealers and everyone else who make his life a misery, he barely stops to ask himself why the mysterious Marlene should be going to so much trouble to promote a show of his work in a Tokyo department store, of all places, and then to drag him all the way to New York, where they squat in an abandoned apartment, on the run from the law, until it finally dawns that he's involved in something very dodgy indeed. Then, against all his high-minded principles, he embarks on a work of forgery to replace one of his hero's long-lost early works, while his slow-witted brother struggles to fill in the missing parts of the jigsaw.

Carey has evidently done a lot of research into the mechanics of art forgery and false attribution. From this he spins a tortuous plot which would not shame a Jeffrey Archer but which ends up being somewhat predictable.

Equally predictable is the depiction of the art world as a shark pool of greedy investors who know the price of everything and the artistic value of nothing. Under the implacable laws of supply and demand, a work of art is simply a rather pretty kind of share certificate, while the artist himself is only worth the price of his last auctioned work. All this may be true, but it is hardly novel.

As a painter, Michael Boone is also a bit of a cliché, with his sweeping theatrical gestures, his manic-depressive moods, the sound and fury of his rants against the system. He's a conflicted Hollywood artist, straight out of central casting. Carey takes great trouble to show how sensitive he is to colour, detailing the tubes of paint he orders, how he mixes them, his disgust at a second-rate painter's work; yet when he comes to describing the woman with whom he's supposedly besotted, he tells us she has "baby blue" eyes on page 126 and then "almond" eyes on page 173. (Some misattribution, surely?)

Slow Bones, apparently brain damaged in an incident in which he and his brutal father attempted to drown each other in the bath, is actually a more rounded character. Though his mental state has a *Cuckoo's Nest*-like naivety, his unhinged monologues display a Faulkneresque artistry which his brother's confessionals fail to achieve. One is tempted to wonder whether, if Slow Bones had narrated the whole thing, the novel might not have been rather more interesting and less obvious.



BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ WHEN HMV took over Ottakar's at the start of June, Alan "Weasel" Giles made it clear redundancies were inevitable. The redundancies are likely to be mercifully few, there being only 32 duplications in a total 330 sites but the head office mob is likely to be culled. With one obvious exception. Heneage has accepted a lucrative consultancy with HMV. The new bosses also said that while the Ottakar's name was "not sacrosanct", the "spirit" of the vanquished company would live on.

It's hard to see how this can be so, when even the original spirit of Waterstone's has failed to survive, let alone that of Dillons.

Still, while HMV and Waterstone's have long been slaves to corporate paranoia, James Heneage of Ottakar's was always at least willing to listen to awkward questions, rather than prevent them being asked. Perhaps this will help.

■ MEANWHILE, things are hotting up at Waterstone's HQ in Brentford. Literally. Not only has the air-conditioning broken, but the recent office refurbishment has left senior managers fuming. Gerry Johnson, the seemingly amenable MD, has had all their offices knocked down and converted to Dilbert-style cubicles. This has put a few highly-paid noses out of joint and the underlings can now hear everything that goes on in private meetings which proved quite revealing during the Ottakar's takeover. On the bright side, it will put to an end Johnson's habit of barging into offices without knocking, as none of them have doors any more. Or ceilings come to that.

■ MATTHEW d'Ancona's debut novel, *Tabatha's Code*, is "a great book that any *GQ* reader should enjoy", enthuses "DJ" in the August issue of *GQ*.

Admirers of *GQ* editor Dylan Jones's unrivalled record of symbiosis – he and his contributing editor Tony Parsons puff each other's books, he and *Indie* editor Simon Kelner employ each other as columnists – will be delighted that his love of such cosy arrangements remains undiminished. The pair are naturally chums – a d'Ancona diary earlier this year bizarrely featured the Tory commentator 's attendance at a Beverly Hills party "thrown by Elton John and David Furnish for Dylan Jones" – and Jones writes for the *Spectator*. His most recent appearance on 1 July was apt – as a pants correspondent.

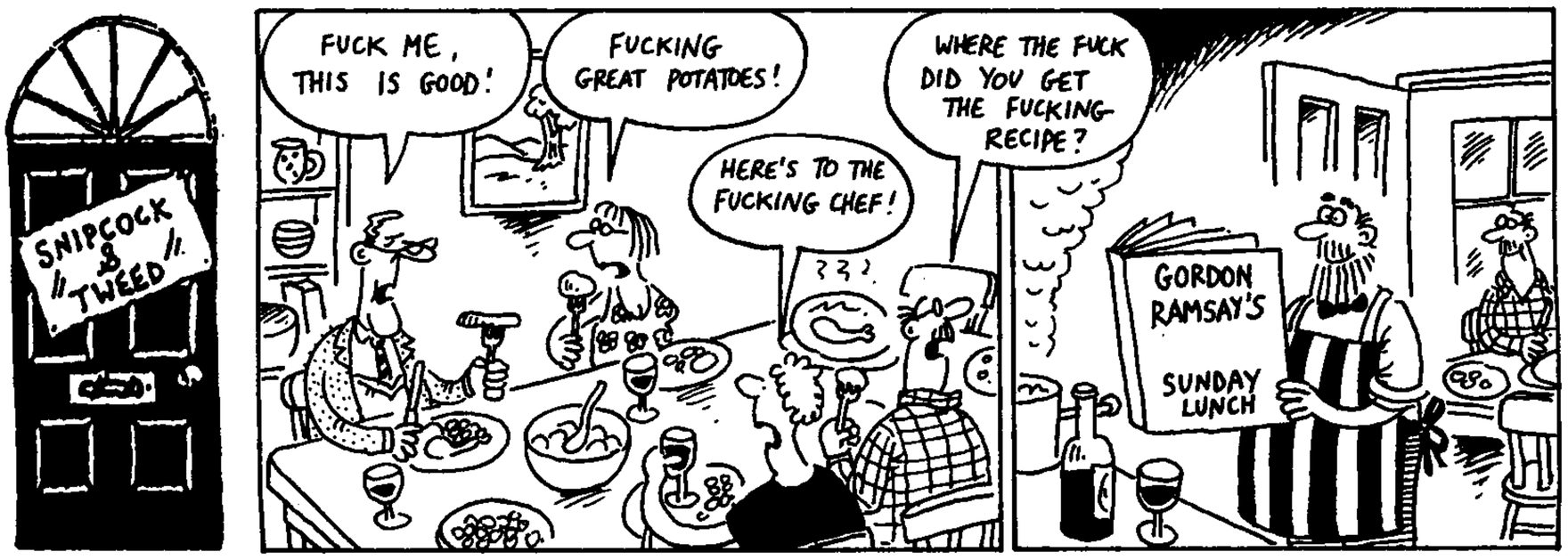
'Bookworm'

LIBRARY NEWS

■ AFTER two years on the market, Totteridge Library in Barnet, north London, is to be sold to a Virgin Islands-based property development firm which has no intention of replacing the library service.

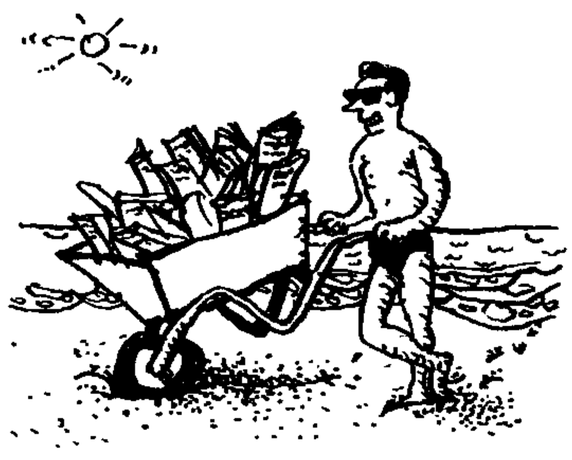
Barnet Council shut the library in 2004, claiming it would be too expensive to bring it up to disability access standards. But Totteridge's readers thought they'd still have somewhere to go when, in response to their campaign, the council agreed that the sale would be made conditional on the buyers including a library in the development of the site (*Eye* 1150). Earlier this year the council announced that it was open to all offers and would look into alternative library provision.

Now the council has announced the sale of the site to Bonshire Investments – out of 31 bids for the prime spot. Of the alternative library provision, however, there was not a word.



SUMMER READING IN THE EYE

OUR panel of celebrity critics reveal what they'll be packing for the beach



Allan Hollinghurst
Novelist

Some years ago the young urban historians Beverley Cleverly and Guang Hoo Hee published a revelatory book on the public conveniences of Tirana, a monument of Ur-modernism little known to western architectural historians. Now in *Rococo on the Limpopo* (Grace & Favour, £129.99) they turn their attention to the lavatories of the lower Nile. This is a riveting book – as spacious and pungent as the edifices it so painstakingly describes.

Alison Lurie
Novelist

Helen Simpson's *Constitutional* (Cape) is the perfect book to take on holiday. Any of these wonderful, marvellous, perceptive, fantastic, engaging…[*continues*] stories can be read on a short plane or train ride, on a bus, in transit up a pyramid, while sitting on a camel, jogging along the Great Wall of China, snorkelling beneath the Bahamian surf… [*continues*]

D.J. Taylor
Novelist and critic

In a lifetime of seeking out obscure writers of whom no one else has heard, it has always pained me that Esme Snargs (?1899–1923), author of *Spring Buds, Autumn Leaves* and *In My Window Box*, should be so little valued by the reading public. Now in *Snargs: Fiction's Lost Assassin* (University of West Anglia Press, available by download) Professor Edwin Dulle has triumphantly re-established his reputation. Everything is here, from Snargs' first tentative courtship of Lady Ottoline Morrell – who, it is amusing to learn, referred to him as "Snargy" and on one occasion mistook him for the footman… [*continues*]

Andrew Motion
Poet Laureate

Full many a tome have I read this year
Each pithy and passing true
Yet all of them by my dearest friends
What *is* a chap to do?
[*Will this do*? – A.M.]

A.C. Grayling
Philosopher and man-about-town

What are the vital elements of a novel that will last as long as time? Pundits have long pondered this vexing conundrum. My own view is that it should contain an elaborate and quasi-humorous recreation of a Jewish childhood, preferably in Manchester, and be written by one of my closest friends. Happily Howard Jacobson's *Prestwich Revisited, Once Again* (Cape) meets all these criteria.

David Hare
Playwright

The British novel is such a sexless thing – laughable descriptions of love-making and so on – that it's an uplifting experience to find that, in her new novel *The Night Watch*, Sarah Waters has the imagination, the temperament and the technique to provide the searing descriptions of rampant lesbo totty that us red-blooded readers so desperately require. Phwoarr!

Irvine Welsh
Professional Scotsman

Forbye, did ye ken that yer man Alan Warner has a new novel oot? And him from Auchermuchty the while? Yon's a kenspeckle lad, to be sure. Ah was richt impressed, too, by Tam McTarragiggle's *Oot Of Ma Fuckin' Head* (Jacobite Press). Fuckin' top man, oor Tam. [Shouldn't that be *"a compelling evocation of contemporary Glaswegian landscapes in all their desolate glory?"* Ed.]

Andrew Roberts
Historian

Fascinated since college days by the career of Sir Harold Anstruther-Weems, briefly Fisheries Minister in the short-lived government of Bonar Law, I was delighted to find that in *Weems: The Reluctant Democrat* (Snobbe and Gargoyle, £300) Ralph Bigot has finally given this undervalued Tory of the old school his belated due. In our vulgar, egalitarian age, where every illiterate teenager regards the vote as his birthright, Weems' intransigence over any enlightened measure can come as a bracing experience. Rightly, Bigot devotes several pages to Weems' celebrated disagreement with Tory chief whip Montague Savage over whether a Field Marshall's widow should take precedence at dinner over the younger daughter of a Marquess. Such titans are, alas, long departed from a world populated by pigmies and characterised by cant.

A.S. Byatt
Novelist and critic

Carmen Callil's *Bad Faith* (Cape) is, in my judgement, a rare and momentous thing. Callil's sardonic humour, her pitiless eye for detail and her role – when managing director of Chatto and Windus – in the transfer of large sums of money into my bank account make it an altogether compelling (*that's enough Summer Reading. Ed.*)

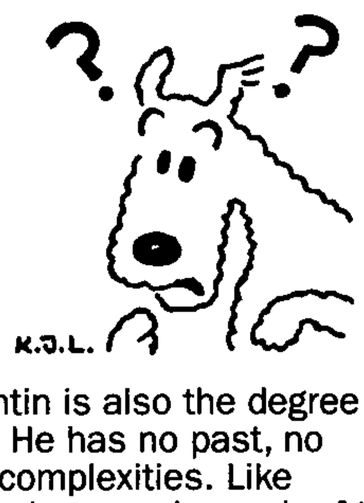
By very publicly hosting a tea party Sadie Frost is showing off a whimsical, a contrapuntal side to her character. She is saying "I am an interesting and unpredictable woman."

PETER YORK,
Guardian

Pseuds Corner

The Tintin books announce themselves on their front covers as "Adventures". This, plus their action-packed nature, might suggest that they are dominated by what Roland Barthes calls the "proairetic code" – that is, the code of action. But, in fact, another code is equally, if not more, dominant: the code Barthes calls the "herme-neutic". What does the hermeneutic do? It is made up, Barthes tells us, of all the aspects of a text that "constitute an enigma and lead to its solution"…

Tintin means, literally, "Nothing". His face, round as an O with two pinpricks for eyes, is what Herge himself described as "the degree zero of typeage" – a typographic vanishing point. Tintin is also the degree zero of personage. He has no past, no sexual identity, no complexities. Like Cocteau's Orphee, who spends much of the film in the negative space or dead world on the far side of the mirror, he is a writer who does not write.



Extract from TOM McCARTHY's 'Tintin and the Secret of Literature',
Guardian

All songs written by Scott Walker except 'Psoriatic', in which the words
Ja da ja da
ja da ja da
jing jing
jing
were written by Bob Carleton and published by EMI Feist Catalog Inc

Sleeve notes to Scott Walker's 'The Drift'

1963, oh what a year! Kennedy was shot and I was born! In fact it's my birthday next week. Monday 3 July. I share with it many greats: Julie Burchill, Franz Kafka, Ken Russell, to name just a few.

TRACY EMIN,
Independent

The first time

…I received energy I was 18 and sunbathing in Central Park. A man was sitting under a tree with a sign saying: "Ring this bell to receive energy." I don't normally approach strangers, but it just felt instinctive. He didn't want money – it would be wrong to pay for something I already had. I had to clear my mind and just focus on my hand. We didn't touch, but fed off each other's energy, palm to palm, for an hour and a half. It felt like the G-force. Afterwards, I couldn't stand up. My whole body was throbbing. It made the world seem a smaller and more beautiful place. I can do it on others now – I can just lean on my sister and get energy. We only use 15% of our brains – this is another way to get more from our bodies.

Actress JAIME WINSTONE,
Sunday Times Style Section

That headbutt was not a rational act. Nor did it represent a mere Rooney moment – a flash of violent temper against someone who had annoyed him. Rather, it was an act of cosmic discontent. It was a futile gesture of protest against the cruelties of sport and the far greater cruelties of time.

SIMON BARNES,
The Times

In *The Stranger*, the existentialist novel by Albert Camus, an alienated French-Algerian man, Meursault, kills an Arab on the beach in the glare of the sunlight. It is a senseless act, as senseless as they way he fires one deadly shot, and then four more into the prone body. Zinedine Zidane, a Frenchman born to Algerian parents in Marseille, did not kill anyone in the glare of the floodlights of Berlin's Olympic Stadium. His senseless act, beneath the gaze of a billion people, merely knocked an Italian off his feet. All that Zidane killed was a certain narrative of his life.

ROGER COHEN,
International Herald Tribune

CONTRIBUTORS: Mhairi Mcfarlane, Harry Campbell, David Hukin, Anon, Tim Makepeace, Neil Bennett, Charles Cumming.

£10 paid for all entries

IN THE BACK

TAX CREDIT FRAUD

False Dawn?

THE first official estimates of tax credits fraud and error reveal waste on a breathtaking scale.

Even on the government's own figures, for 2003/04 the government won't recover up to £1.74bn that it wrongly paid out. That's more than three times the NHS's total current deficit – enough to keep operations going in Iraq for a couple of years, or nearly half the government's aid budget. No wonder the news was slipped out just before the end of the parliamentary term on the day the energy review stole the headlines.

Most of the loss emerges from the design of the system, which guarantees overpayments when people earn more money in the course of the tax year (but then often can't afford to pay it back); then there are errors both official and on the part of the public, and – increasingly – fraud. In 2003/04 this cost £70m; by 2005/06 it was up to an estimated £131m.

Much of the escalation in fraud is down to organised gangs running identity theft scams. Thirteen thousand Department for Work and Pensions staff had their details stolen and used to commit tax credit frauds over the internet at the end of 2005, even though the government knew about the threat from ID theft up to a year before then (contrary to the impression Paymaster-General Dawn Primarolo gave parliament's Treasury select committee earlier this year). And Primarolo received a specific briefing on the risk six months before the attack.

Lib Dem spokesman David Laws and *Private Eye* have been trying to establish whether enough was done to prevent the major frauds. Should internet access, allowing claims to be made with the barest of personal information, have been left open so long until the inevitable abuse on a grand scale?

All demands for information have been stonewalled. After several months, the *Eye's* request under freedom of information laws for details of suspected ID theft each quarter in 2005 "or the dates at which estimates were made" was met with the most pisspoor response yet (and the *Eye* has received a few).

"The question implies that estimates of suspected fraud cases were made at fixed intervals and this is not the case," replied a spokesman after, he confirmed, consulting "several stakeholders". So no reply – but yet another technique to add to the repertoire for concealing information: willful misinterpretation of the question.

Scores of questions from Laws have also gone unanswered, suggesting more than just routine insolence in the face of scrutiny; it looks like "Red" Dawn has something serious to hide. She managed to dodge MPs' questions on the subject last time but now the scale of the scandal is official, next time the select committee might not be so forgiving.

PLEA BARGAINS

Memory lapse

A SENIOR crown court judge has escaped a potentially embarrassing grilling over whether he offered defence barristers a secret deal to pass lighter sentences on their clients – an organised crime family – in return for early guilty pleas.

The appeal court has finally published its long-awaited ruling on the appeal by Tony and Martin Bowers, leaders of the Peacock gang, who pleaded guilty to plotting a series of heists, one involving the £1m Brinks Mat robbery at Gatwick Airport in 2003.

Last March, as reported in the *Eye*, the appeal court heard extraordinary evidence from the men's barristers, supported by a senior court official, who claimed that trial judge Christopher Elwen had "reneged" on a deal, cut behind the prosecution's back, to sentence the gang to a maximum of only seven years each in return for guilty pleas. Instead they received consecutive sentences totalling more than 50 years.

The men claimed that the sentences were manifestly excessive and that they had a "legitimate expectation" of a shorter term. But the appeal court rejected a suggestion that Judge Elwyn should be called to answer the plea deal allegations from the barristers and senior court clerk, Nick Turner. Instead, in a letter the judge said he was not in the habit of offering indications on sentence and never intended to in this case. "However, reflecting carefully on what I can recall having taken place almost two years ago," he added, "I cannot now say, with absolute certainty, that I did not say to Mr Turner something which he may have misconstrued, although I am unable to think what it might have been." A mere misunderstanding – so that's all right then.

PENSIONS

Battle of Trafalgar

NOT EVEN the most sceptical observers expected it, but the government's one-year-old Pensions Regulator is encouraging gambling with retirement savings – and boosting the already turbo-charged hedge fund industry in the process.

Eye 1160 reported how the regulator had allowed Norwegian engineering giant Kvaerner to walk away from its UK pension fund and the 31,000 members who worked for its UK operation, Trafalgar House. The fund has been left with a thumping deficit and only a shell of a company, Trafalgar House Trustees Ltd, standing behind it.

Now the "pro-active investment strategy" that the regulator evidently approved has been revealed: 20 percent of the assets will be invested in hedge funds, ie financial gambles, and 7.5 percent in risky, highly-leveraged, private equity investments. Not only is the fund short of money, it's gambling with what little it does have.

The fund trustees, led by a recent former Kvaerner director, justify this approach by pointing out that if the ambitious strategy doesn't pay off, the Pension Protection Fund, set up at the same time as the regulator and funded by other companies with occupational pension funds, will cough up. The regulator is thus forcing those running schemes more responsibly to underwrite the Kvaerner fund's gambling.

With such a precedent set it won't be long before many more firms decide to save money by under-funding their pension schemes and selecting riskier investments, safe in the knowledge that others will pay if the punt doesn't come off. More cash will rush into unregulated hedge funds, which the European Central Bank last month said posed a major risk to global financial stability; and into private equity, which many commentators already fear is turning into a bubble – all with a government regulator's seal of approval.

● **THE Chancellor Gordon Brown used his annual Mansion House speech to announce to the nation's bankers that "the Treasury is now working with [EU internal market Commissioner] Charles McCreevy and with you to ensure that the European financial services white paper signals a new wave of liberalisation."**

A clue as to how this will work came in an announcement from McCreevy shortly afterwards, in which he welcomed reports that he had commissioned recommending relaxations for the private equity industry and hedge funds.

The reports were written for McCreevy by experts drawn from the likes of, ahem, hedge funds RAB Capital and MAN and banks that make a mint from the business, including Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs. Among their suggestions were relaxing limits on how pension funds can invest in these risky and expensive investments. How the bankers applauded!

BP COLOMBIA

The cheque's in the pipeline

BP has secretly settled the case being brought by more than 50 destitute Colombian farmers rendered homeless by construction of a major oil pipeline through their land (*Eye* 1142).

The claim switched to the UK from Colombia after one of the farmers, Jhon Morales, was killed by gunmen and their lawyer, Marta Hinestroza, was threatened, her name finding its way on to a paramilitary hit list.

Although the settlement included no admission of liability by BP, the deal – believed to be up to £3m in compensation and legal costs – further undermines the oil giant's efforts to promote itself as socially and environmentally ethical.

Remember the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline (*Eyes passim*)? Or the two criminal grand jury investigations in the US following the Texas City refinery explosion? And the massive Alaskan oil spill from corroded pipe? Last week's settlement brings the total figure for compensation and fines set aside by BP in the last year to around £500m.

Leigh Day and Co, the London law firm which represented the Colombian farmers, accused the BP-led pipeline consortium of paying paltry or no compensation for the land and livelihoods ruined by the pipeline since 1995. It also claimed BP gained advantage from terror tactics used by the Colombian army and paramilitaries to guard the pipeline.

The *Eye* has also learnt that Amnesty International wrote to BP chief executive Lord John Browne to express its concern that BP's security arrangements around the OCENSA pipeline may be exacerbating the human rights crisis in Colombia. Kate Allen, Amnesty's director, reminded BP of its "duty of care to ensure their activities do not wittingly or unwittingly contribute to the human rights crisis".

Allen was particularly concerned about the infiltration of supposedly demobilized paramilitary killers into private security firms used by the oil companies to protect installations from guerilla attack and asked BP to check its vetting procedures. "It is not sufficient for BP to claim that it adheres to the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights," she wrote.

BP maintained throughout that landowners were fairly compensated, and this claim was supported by the Colombian environment ministry. A joint statement issued on behalf of both BP and Leigh Day said: "Colombian farmers are pleased with the outcome of the mediation and are of the view that BP Colombia has acted in a fair, committed and sympathetic manner."

Well, up to a point. The Colombian Solidarity Campaign, which took up the farmers' case back in 2001, said: "Whatever spin BP puts on the settlement, this case blows a massive hole through its claims to social responsibility. Why didn't the corporation listen when the community warned against the environmental risks of the project? Despite compelling evidence to the contrary, still the corporation has not admitted liability. This is not yet justice… it's a step in the right direction."

NUCLEAR CLEAN-UP

Safety last

TONY BLAIR may have committed the country to new nuclear power stations without a proper debate, but plans to deal with existing atomic waste have already breached safety rules.

Private Eye can reveal that Dipesh Shah's (pictured) sudden resignation as chief executive of the Atomic Energy Authority (AEA) was prompted by a letter from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) saying that his organisation, which runs the potentially dangerous Dounreay nuclear site, was not acting as a "responsible licensee".

The HSE slammed way the AEA was breaking nuclear licensing rules in its privatisation programme as "clearly unacceptable".

Shah was attempting to launch a private company out of the AEA to compete for nuclear clean-up contracts from the government. He wrote to around 120 of the top managers at the AEA, offering them well-paid jobs in the new company. Roughly 1,000 other staff, mostly at Dounreay, were sent letters telling them they would stay with the AEA until they were sold off to whichever company finally wins the "site licence" to run and clear up nuclear waste at the Scottish complex.

The HSE was furious because Shah did not consult it about the proposed changes. Taking 120 key staff into a new commercial company could severely compromise safety at Dounreay.

In the letter obtained by the *Eye*, the head of the Nuclear Installation Inspectorate (NII), the atomic division of the HSE, wrote to the AEA's head of safety "to express NII's disappointment at the letters issued to UKAEA staff by Mr Shah last week". The safety inspectors were not told about the move and "only found out about the letter through the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and not until after the letter was issued. We would have expected at the very least to be forewarned and preferably to have been consulted before such a letter was sent out."

The HSE made it clear that the AEA was breaking the rules and being irresponsible in setting up a private company in this way. It said the AEA should not propose restructuring "when management of change documents have not yet even been written, never mind agreed" with safety regulators. "This is not the way a responsible licensee manages change," the HSE said.

The HSE became angrier when it learnt that the AEA had run presentations to staff announcing the new unauthorised restructuring. "As you know, no restructuring programme has been agreed with ourselves and we will not feel in any way duty

bound to keep to any programme and promises you make to staff at this time," it said.

Soon after the HSE arrived, Shah announced he would leave the AEA. However, he will stay in post until November and the authority still has extensive plans to privatise the site and bring in contractors. Many staff at Dounreay fear that commercial plans will take precedence over both their jobs and safety standards.

NUCLEAR CLEANING UP

A family affair at Amec

ONE of the government's leading nuclear waste advisers is partly run by the private firm Amec, according to documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act by the campaigning website, *Nuclear Spin*.

The government founded the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CORWM) three years ago to advise it on how to deal with nuclear waste. Safely storing Britain's "legacy" of atomic refuse is central to the argument about building new nuclear power stations – as Amec's own Sam Usher has explained. "There is an argument that you shouldn't build new nuclear powerstations if you can't manage the waste from existing ones," he said.

Amec hopes to win big contracts to clean up the old radioactive trash and build new reactors. The documents released to *Nuclear Spin* show that the firm has burrowed cosily into the committee, where it has a contract to manage its business. Amec acts as programme manager, running discussions at plenary meetings and organizing the committee's public consultations.

Mr Usher, an Amec employee who works for the committee, wrote an article in Amec's staff magazine explaining how the firm is gaining influence over Britain's atomic strategy through the CORWM work. "This is a high profile contract that puts Amec at the leading edge of developing nuclear strategy – not only in the waste management industry, but to have an influence on new build," he wrote.

As well as hoping to win contracts to build new power stations, Amec also wants to sell its "GeoMelt" technology to the government; GeoMelt being Amec's scheme to store atom waste by baking it into a sealed, glass-like substance. CORWM has already discussed Amec's GeoMelt system at board meetings.

CORWM says it hired Amec because of the firm's expertise. But if the government relies so heavily on private firms for nuclear advice and does not maintain its own independent advisers, it will be at a disadvantage when negotiating contracts. It will find it much harder to agree a fair price for clean-up contracts if Amec staff rather than civil servants have been involved in drawing up the ground rules.

Amec, which has hired former Energy Minister and Blair adviser Brian Wilson to help it win nuclear work, is also involved in CORWM's public relations. These are run by a private PR firm, Luther Pendragon. Incredibly, while Luther Pendragon deals with inquiries to CORWM, it is actually employed by Amec and not Defra, the appropriate government department. Defra initially refused to release many documents, claiming they were the private property of Amec or Luther Pendragon, and later tried to charge Luther Pendragon's consultancy rate of £120 an hour for any documents produced.

The papers show Luther Pendragon suggested the "line to take on attacks by Professor David Ball" when he resigned from and then criticized CORWM. The PR firm suggested describing his allegations as "patently absurd". Luther Pendragon also suggested and arranged meetings with leading Tory MPs on atomic waste and prepared pen portraits of MPs on the environment committee.

Private Eye asked the CORWM about Amec's role but was directed to staff at Luther Pendragon. The PR firm said the fact that it was subcontracted to Amec rather than working directly for CORWM was "purely administrative". It said Amec was only hired to make the committee "work to time and budget".

JUST FANCY THAT!

"The one thing that can be foreseen is that the cost of disposing of nuclear waste, reprocessing and decommissioning of nuclear power stations will go on escalating. It is the one element in the entire equation that can be predicted with any certainty."

– Shadow energy minister Tony Blair during the standing committee for the Electricity Bill, in 1989.

BARRATT HOMES

Chemical reaction

MORE on the plight of residents of Cooper's Walk, a Barratt Homes development in east London. It is on the site of a former paint factory and the houses were contaminated with naphthalene, a potentially carcinogenic chemical used in the manufacture of paint (*Eye* 1151).

Now medical tests have revealed that the owner of one of the worst-affected homes has a cocktail of some very nasty industrial chemicals in her body, in huge quantities.

In February we told how single mother Lois Grayson had suffered kidney problems, migraines and asthma and had had to move out of her home. High levels of naphthalene gas in her basement rendered her house unsaleable. Neighbour Anita Drewery underwent a blood serum analysis which found large quantities of a naphthalene derivative and lindane, a dangerous chemical used as a wood preservative and insecticide, which has been linked to breast cancer, in her bloodstream.

Though Barratt claimed (and still does) that the former paint factory site was clean when it built the homes in 1989, it gave assurances to the *Eye* that it was doing everything possible to help residents affected by the contamination. Six months later, little has changed.

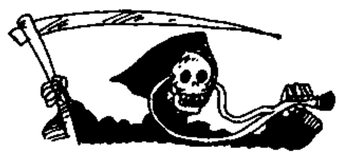
Lois Grayson's health, however, has continued to deteriorate. A recent fat-biopsy revealed eight times the population average of lindane, the chemical earlier detected in Anita Drewery's blood. She also had eight times the "normal" level of polybrominated byphenyls (PBBs – used as a flame retardant) and six times the population average of toluene, a chemical used in paint thinners. Blood tests indicate that an enzyme that acts to neutralize dangerous "free radicals" in the body has reduced to 29 percent of its normal function, probably because its production is being blocked by the lindane.

Ms Grayson also suffers from multiple chemical sensitivity, chronic fatigue, asthma, migraines, food intolerance and short-term memory problems. There are no antidotes to these chemicals and, because they are fat-soluble, they persist in the body for decades.

The properties were designated as contaminated by Newham borough council in 2002 after a survey carried out on the council's behalf by scientists from Birmingham University, which recommended further investigation. Newham decided not to investigate further. It did, however, take a cheque from Barratt for £4.4m by way of compensation for the impact of a separate development of 700 new properties in the borough at the start of this year.

Barratt, meanwhile, has failed to offer compensation to those who paid large sums for homes now worth nothing, and whose health has been damaged, possibly irreversibly. A spokesman told the *Eye*: "We wrote to Ms Grayson on 11 July 2006 inviting her to submit any medical evidence in advance of a personal meeting, so that medical and legal advice could be obtained and matters progressed. Newham Council and the other residents have been pleased with the positive progress made this year, and we are keen to continue that and hope to get these issues resolved well before the end of the year."

IN THE BACK HEALTH SPECIAL: SEE OVER ➤



HEALTH SPECIAL

Public flogging

EMBARRASSED into withdrawing her original plans to allow private companies to take over the entire £64bn purchasing and management of healthcare for millions of NHS patients (she said the plan was a mistake), Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt last week outlined new plans to flog the management functions alone.

However, draft documents seen by the *Eye* suggest ministers are finding other routes to enable private sector companies like the *Eye*'s old friends Kaiser Permanente, United Healthcare, Bupa et al to get some control of NHS purse strings.

The second wave of Independent Treatment Centres (ITCs) planned around London, Manchester, Cumbria and Lancashire will assess patients' needs, diagnose, plan treatments, carry out elective and day surgery and organise pre- and post-operative care. Called variously Integrated Clinical Assessment and Treatment services (ICATS), Capture Assess Treat and Support Services (CATS) and Referral Assessment, Diagnostics and Treatment Service (RADTS), the draft says they are "designed to manage demand for secondary care by providing an extended primary care service".

What does that mean in English? Critics say it is management speak for giving the private sector more control over commissioning; and will introduce yet another tier of health care with decisions and control of patients' needs passing from the GP to those running the centres.

According to the draft, some centres will be able to refer patients on to NHS hospitals and some will also be able to book services from itself. In some cases GPs may not be able to circumvent the new centres unless there is a suspicion of cancer or an immediate life-threatening condition.

So far the *Eye* has been told that only private companies have bid for the centres and it's not rocket science to work out that private health (purchasing) is going to want to buy from private health (provider hospital) whenever possible.

NHS plc, anyone?

M.D. WRITES...

NHS brake-down

THE bulk of the £512m debt clocked up by NHS hospitals has gone on "over treating" (ie offering such a good service that you treat more patients more quickly than your commissioning PCTs can pay for). So although the excellent ophthalmology department at Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS trust can treat cataracts within two to six weeks... it's not allowed to!

As one surgical director explains: "Huddersfield PCT are demanding 1) a substantial reduction in the number of review appointments in out-patient clinics 2) no routine referrals to be seen before 10 weeks from referral 3) no routine elective surgery to be carried out before 10 weeks from listing for cataracts and 5 months from listing for other operations.

"If we do not accede to these demands, the PCT will probably withhold payment for the work that we do and the financial stability of the hospital will be put under severe stress. These demands are not simply related to ophthalmology, they extend to all specialties and the restrictions are much more widespread in ENT and general surgery. Calderdale PCT is almost certain to confirm a similar position, so it would be prudent to modify our practice across the whole area in a similar way.

"Some of us will find, in the coming weeks and months, that we may not have enough work to fill our operating lists. The Trust management has no choice but to accept the statutory right of the commissioning PCTs to set such demands on their contract with us, but I deeply regret the adverse impact that they will have on the quality of the care that we can offer to our patients and the impact that they will have on the structure of our working lives. Don't feel that this is a problem confined to this part of the country PCTs all over the country are applying similar or worse measures, if that makes you feel any better."

Yes: as Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt put it: "It's our best year ever!"

Tribal conflict

MORE on the private health firm Mercury, the wholly-owned subsidiary of Tribal group, which runs the St Mary's treatment centre in Portsmouth.

Since the last issue, health workers have contacted the *Eye* to say that Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) throughout Hampshire – and not simply, as we reported, on the Isle of Wight – are out of pocket to Mercury, having been obliged to pay up front for operations and other procedures that have not been carried out. Further, the taxpayer has had to pay twice as the patients have been treated elsewhere. Meanwhile Mercury gaily pockets the profits.

A report last week by the local newspaper, the *News*, found that Mercury's St Mary's treatment centre had been paid for 34,000 operations and procedures in the past six months – and had carried out fewer than 19,000! The worst hit PCTs in Fareham, Gosport and East Hampshire had paid for 1,210 operations, but only a fifth were actually done.

At Mercury's other five other "design, build and manage" centres, part of the £214m deal struck with the Department of Health two years ago, the picture appears the same. The Will Adams NHS treatment centre at Gillingham was contracted to carry out 4,000 procedures a year, but in its first nine months did only 435.

According to a report by pressure group Health Emergency, while Mercury pockets the money for the 2,500 operations it is not doing, the local NHS Medway Trust which runs the Medway Maritime Hospital is making £12m in cuts by losing 160 jobs.

Reverting to type

THE beleaguered Norfolk and Norwich hospitals NHS trust, which is lumbered with a £15m deficit as a result of a PFI deal that a parliamentary committee described as "the unacceptable face of capitalism" and is preparing to lay off 450 staff, is employing all its commercial acumen again... by quietly handing work to a relative of one of its managers.

The trust has decided to "pilot" the outsourcing of its medical transcription services to a little-known company called Alden, which will send the typing to its hundreds of employees in Chennai, India. One of Alden's directors just happens to be the brother-in-law of hospital consultant and executive board member Krishna Sethia.

When the *Eye* asked whether Sethia had promoted the arrangement the trust denied it vehemently, claiming that such allegations were "malicious" and the company had been picked purely because of its experience. A spokesman did confirm, though, that Alden had been awarded the work without competition and would be paid half its standard rate over the pilot period.

Next day, however, perhaps having realised this was a clear breach of procurement rules, the spokesman called back to say that Alden would now be doing the work for free. (It will, of course, have a clear advantage in any competition for the full outsourcing contract if and when it goes ahead – with the loss of more jobs.) Oh, and he eventually admitted that the claim that Krishna Sethia had nothing to do with the deal was a lie: Sethia had in fact come up with the idea and had introduced his brother-in-law's firm to the trust.

The trust board, meanwhile, was "satisfied that there is no conflict of interests".

PS: Is outsourcing transcription generally a good idea? Last month health union Unison reported an increasing number of errors in outsourced transcription – including potentially fatal ones such as mistaking "hypertension" for "hypotension" and "urological" for "neurological".

Life is Goodier

IN NHS management, nothing succeeds like... failure. So it's no surprise to find that Gareth Goodier (pictured), the man with much of the responsibility for the Paddington Health Campus debacle (*Eyes passim*) in his roles as boss of the Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Trust and the North West London Strategic Health Authority (NWLSHA), is off to a grand new job.

Goodier has been appointed chief executive of the Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, including the world-renowned Addenbrooke's Hospital. His new chairman, Dr Mary Archer, claimed to be "delighted that we have found someone of Dr Goodier's calibre". Here's a quick reminder of that calibre...

The Paddington Health Campus super-hospital was to combine several major hospitals on one site for £360m. As it became apparent that the scheme needed more land than was actually available, the projected costs spiralled to £1bn. An Office of Government Commerce review of what went wrong pointed out that members of the public had been trying to tell health chiefs, including Goodier, that the scheme would never work for years, while millions of pounds were spent on management and planning consultants, not to mention lawyers, before the plan finally spluttered to a halt last year.

Dole-ful?

THEY were supposed to tackle childhood obesity, improve treatment of postpartum depression and the quality of life for elderly people and be the eyes and ears of social services to prevent tragedies such as the Victoria Climbie case. In theory, anyway.

Two years ago, so many initiatives needed district nurses and health visitors that the government not only encouraged senior nurses to give up good jobs to re-train, it also funded masters level courses in community nursing.

At Anglia Ruskin University in Chelmsford, for example, 42 nurses completed such courses, funded by the NHS in Essex. They are now highly qualified community specialists (20 as health visitors and 22 as district nurses) and... unemployed. As the course end approached in June, not one student had been offered a job. The posts they had hoped to fill at the end of their course were no longer available, as NHS cuts mean there are not only no new jobs, but many experienced community staff are also losing their jobs.

Job cuts in recent months include 81 community staff in Hackney, including health visitors. A third of all health visitors in North Hampshire are about to go, in order to save £300,000 a year for the cash-strapped primary care trust.

In an open letter to Tony Blair, they wrote: "The vast majority of us will soon find ourselves unemployed and without the prospect of employment. You have spent a vast amount of government money to finance our educational programme... What we now want is the opportunity to consolidate our experience and make a positive contribution to promoting the health of our nation."

In the City

THE hoopla and hysteria surrounding the now extradited NatWest Three was a triumph for the PR men and lawyers, not to mention their understandably willing clients; but a very bad day for journalism. As to justice, that remains to be delivered in Houston.

Watching events unravel in the days leading up to the trio's televised flight to and arrival in Houston last week was like watching an illusionist at work. The audience – hacks and their readers, MPs and peers, the CBI and assorted senior suits – were cleverly distracted from the case against the former bankers which might undermine their bid to avoid extradition. Instead, entire attention was focused on the undoubtedly unjust and lop-sided Anglo-American extradition treaty.

As a result there was no meaningful discussion of the evidence against David Bermingham, Giles Darby and Gary Mulgrew. No examination of guilt or innocence. No questioning of their actions which Bermingham himself admitted two years ago "look horrible". Not at least until they were in Houston when suddenly, it seems, there was a case to answer after all.

But the trio shamelessly paraded wives and children in front of the media to command sympathy, proclaim innocence and prevent their extradition. "How can I tell our girls Daddy is being sent to an American jail – even though there is not a scrap of evidence against him?" asked Darby's wife emotively. Two days after Mulgrew shuffled into the Houston court, his former wife was less complimentary. But by then it was safe to go against the OTT media flow.

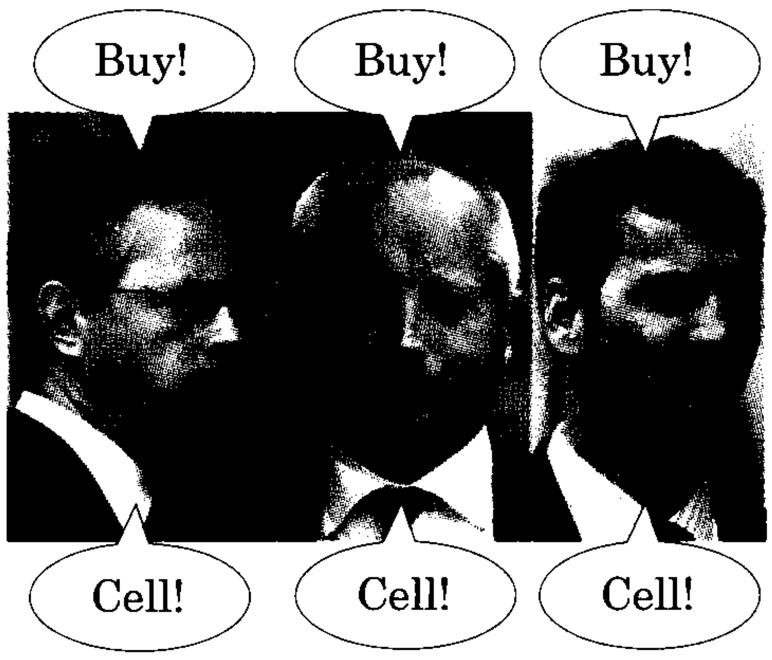
Leading the charge to protect "our boys" from a fate worse than death in a Texas prison has been the Telegraph group, encouraged by chairman, proprietor's son and heir, Aidan Barclay. Just why the Barclays should feel so agitated on behalf of three relatively unknown bankers and campaign against their extradition other than as unfair is unclear.

After all, Sir David Tweedledum and Sir Frederick Tweedledee have not been great fans of British justice when it comes to the libel laws, preferring instead the more sympathetic French courts to pursue the *Observer* and the *Times*. Only two years ago they too felt the rough edge of American justice – and it was not to their liking. Delaware senior judge Leo Strine blocked the original proposed sale of the Telegraph to the Barclay brothers by Conrad Black. In his February 2004 judgment he was less than complimentary.

"Despite his daily and vigorous pursuit of the Telegraph assets over many months, David Barclay claimed to be too ill to be deposed… (Hollinger) International respected this claim, once it was medically documented, although the record in the case casts doubt on the assertion… His son Aidan Barclay… gave helpful testimony but admitted at many points that he did not know what his father had actually done or why… in this litigation the Barclays have portrayed themselves as innocents who have tried to do right by all... but (their contact with Hollinger's advisers) was unaccompanied by the kind of candour necessary for me to draw the inference of highly honorable conduct that the Barclays desire."

Not used to being addressed in such terms, Sirs Tweedledum and Tweedledee described Strine's comments as "grossly unfair" and "in breach of basic principles of natural justice". A view with which Black, now facing trial in Chicago, would no doubt agree.

Obscured by the smoke and mirrors created by the NatWest Three's spin merchants, the case against them is very simple and largely based on their own words in a series of incriminating



emails (detailed way back in *Eye* 1118 of October 2004, six months after the extradition process began), the money trail and the evidence provided by their close Enron buddies, Michael Kopper and his boss chief financial officer Andy Fastow, who are expected to testify against them.

Put simply, in March 2000 the three Greenwich NatWest executives, who expected to be out of a job due to the imminent takeover of NatWest by Royal Bank of Scotland, persuaded NatWest to sell for $1m an identical investment for which Credit Suisse First Boston received $10m and they collected more than $7m for an investment of $252,000 while Kopper and Fastow shared $9m. All three then left GNW and received the money via a Cayman Island account. The investment was 50 percent of a Cayman company whose main asset was a block of Enron shares, which Fastow persuaded Enron to buy back for $30m. As Bermingham candidly admitted before he stopped talking about the deal – "The bare facts look horrible".

Quotes such as "I have a couple of ideas but it may be good if I don't share them with anyone until we know our fate" (Bermingham to Darby); "We should be able to appeal to his (Fastow's) greed" (Bermingham to Mulgrew); and "I will be the first to be delighted if he [Fastow] has found a way to… steal a large portion for himself"; "Large numbers of people are asking what we are up to. I hate lies" (ditto). Presenting Fastow and Kopper with one option for making the killing at the expense of Enron and NatWest, plus its partners Credit Suisse, their comment was: "Problem is that it is too obvious what is happening (ie robbery of LPs – [the two banks] so probably not attractive".

The trio claimed the deal was OK'd by NatWest. RBS has never confirmed this, perhaps not surprisingly. What employer would agree – if it had the full "horrible" facts – to a deal which gave their employees seven times what they were paid or a tenth of what their original partners received?

RBS has said little despite demands from its former executives to come to their aid. They have limited themselves to such comments as reserving their rights against the trio – hardly evidence corroborating innocence despite the strange failure to take any action to recover the $7.3m.

But then RBS has its own problems with Enron and its creditors and shareholders. A year ago it paid $42m to the bankrupt energy trader and settled $329m in claims in return for a payment by Enron of just $20m. But it will not be so cheap to get rid of the shareholders' action. That could cost $100m or more in a settlement, which is reportedly close to agreement.

NatWest/RBS is said to have earned $83m from some 53 deals with Enron between 1994 and its collapse in 2001. Bermingham, Darby and Mulgrew were in on many of those deals. A GNW colleague emailed Mulgrew on the original NatWest investment with Credit Suisse in Fastow's Cayman special purpose vehicle, LJM1 – "This is a GREAT deal, I love it (greed and avarice). And the year-end bonuses raise their ugly heads".

Enron's bankruptcy examiner Neal Batson concluded in November 2003 that there was "evidence sufficient… to conclude that RBS had actual knowledge of the wrongful conduct giving rise to breaches of fiduciary duty by certain of the debtors' officers… gave substantial assistance to the debtors' officers by participating in the transactions… and that RBS aided and abetted certain Enron officers in breaching their fiduciary duties." RBS denied all of this but will settle anyway before the case goes to trial later this year.

Enron and prosecutors have also taken action against all the other investors who shared with the NatWest Three the $19m paid by Enron. So much for a kosher deal!

All of the evidence against the three has been available since they were indicted in 2002. But for good reason, instead of debating that case, their defenders concentrated the public and politicians' minds on the unfair nature of the 2003 extradition treaty, which the US has so far failed to ratify largely because of pressure from the Irish-American lobby concerned about IRA suspects being shipped this way.

There was also a deliberate campaign of misinformation and disinformation much of which has since been exposed for what it was.

The case should and could be prosecuted in Britain by the Serious Farce Office because the alleged victim was a British bank, the fraud happened here and the defendants were British.

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE & RIGG

The SFO declined to investigate, never mind prosecute, because – as is accepted policy with international frauds – whoever gets their case together first wins and the Americans were ready to roll from 2002. That's what extradition is for! The cooperating Enron witnesses were unlikely to cooperate with an SFO prosecution and the Enron evidence was in the US. Many of the meetings which formed part of the case happened in Houston or the Cayman Islands, not London. The money went into a Cayman account.

There was not enough evidence to justify extradition under the beloved old treaty.

All that was formerly required was to prove that there was a case to answer. The email and cash trails, plus the statements from Kopper and Fastow, would have met that old test.

The defendants would not be given bail in Houston, would be kept in the deadly Federal prison system awaiting trial for up to two years along with "porn kings and drug traffickers" and suffering "a sheetless bed and a seatless lavatory".

On arrival in Houston last week all of the above proved somewhat inaccurate. The trio have yet to spend a day in jail but are released on bond. They spent their first night in a hotel and this could continue. There was not even the Feds' favoured full frontal "perp walk" – as with Enron bosses Ken Lay and Jeff Skilling, not to mention Fastow, who were paraded before the press in handcuffs. Instead the NatWest Three were smuggled into court and, though in shackles, were not in the promised prison jumpsuits. They may yet be bailed to return to the UK or at worst will reside in the Houston area with electronic tags – a procedure used for the mostly UK-based BCCI bankers tried in Tampa years ago. Instead of waiting two years, the proceedings could begin as early as September. All highly unusual for extradited defendants. "Clearly this is political" attorney Philip Hilder, a former prosecutor who represents Enron whistleblower Sherron Watkins, told the *Houston Chronicle*. A product of the campaign which forced the Dear Leader to say he would be pressing for bail.

The defendants would be handicapped unless they could return to the UK because of consulting their lawyers to prepare their defence.

How exactly UK lawyers would help with defending a trial in Houston was never clear and even less so now when it emerges that they have hired lawyers from Houston (Bermingham), New York (Darby) and Washington (Mulgrew).

If convicted in the US they would face 20 or 30 years in prison from Judge Roy Bean unlike in Britain.

Each of the seven charges carries a maximum of five years. They were no more likely to face 35 years inside than Skilling or Lay (before he died) were likely to be sentenced to more than the 150 years provided for by adding together the maximum possible sentences on each charge. In fact the prosecution has told the court it will ask for between seven to nine years. And if there are plea bargains – a smart move given a probably unsympathetic Texan jury, the public attacks on unfair local courts and the evidence of Fastow (who helped to sink Lay and Skilling) and Kopper – then it could be well under five, and possibly served in a UK prison.

Cynics suspected all along that faced by the evidence, the NatWest Three only ever had one game plan once they had missed the chance to do a plea bargain deal back in 2002. They were the first to be indicted in the Enron case and were clearly targeted as potential witnesses against Kopper and Fastow. But they lost their marketability and value once Kopper and then Fastow cut deals with the prosecution.

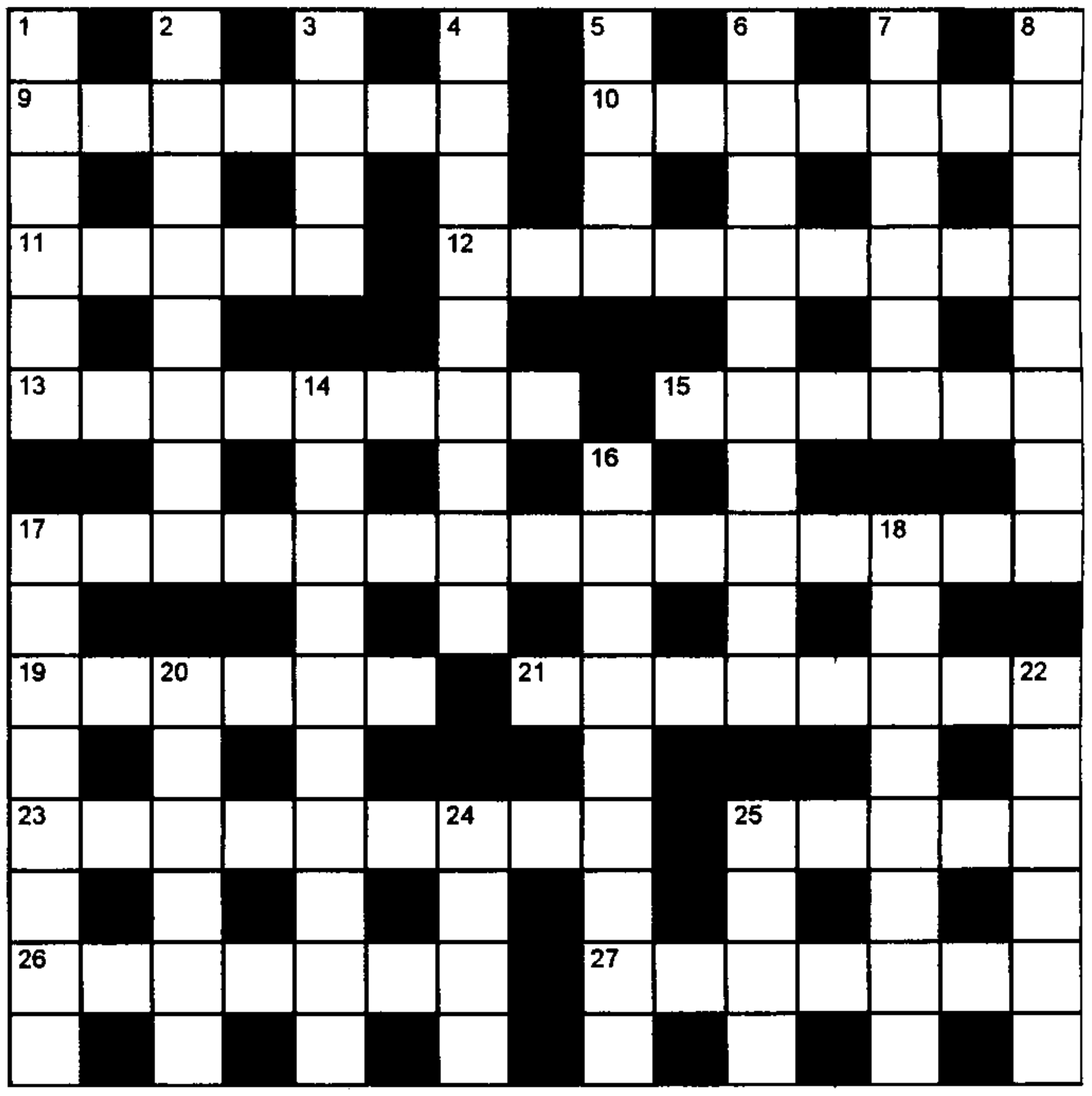
Ever since the aim was to somehow prevent extradition and force the SFO to bring a weaker case here which would then be thrown out or lost like previous high profile prosecutions either because of delay or the lack of US evidence.

And in that they have been helped by the media which never lets the facts get in the way of a good story. Just how these innocent men will be presented if they do a plea bargain or are convicted remains to be seen.

'Slicker'

EYE CROSSWORD 318

by Cyclops



£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 28 July 2006

Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN or via email to crossword@private-eye.co.uk

ACROSS

9 Ex-president, complete arse to Spain (7)
10 He rises, excited for Paris, perhaps (7)
11 Cripes! Boris finally gets English birds (5)
12 A monument to Martin Bell's entrances, almost pissed (9)
13/19 Brenda's lot, maritally? Hey! screwing around with Foreign Office (3,5,6)
15 Regard Grant's small organ? (6)
17 Bush shows what's needed to take down a dictator – Henry goes "Sonofabitch is telling porkies!" (5,3,7)
19 See 13ac.
21 Little sweet butt, er, Fanny, etc.? (8)
23 Sod what you're doing! (9)
25 See copper pressed against male member of clergy? (5)
26 Brenda's back on speed, pussy possibly concealing cocaine (as the street-wise admirer says) (7)
27 Government enterprise stifles political understanding (7)

DOWN

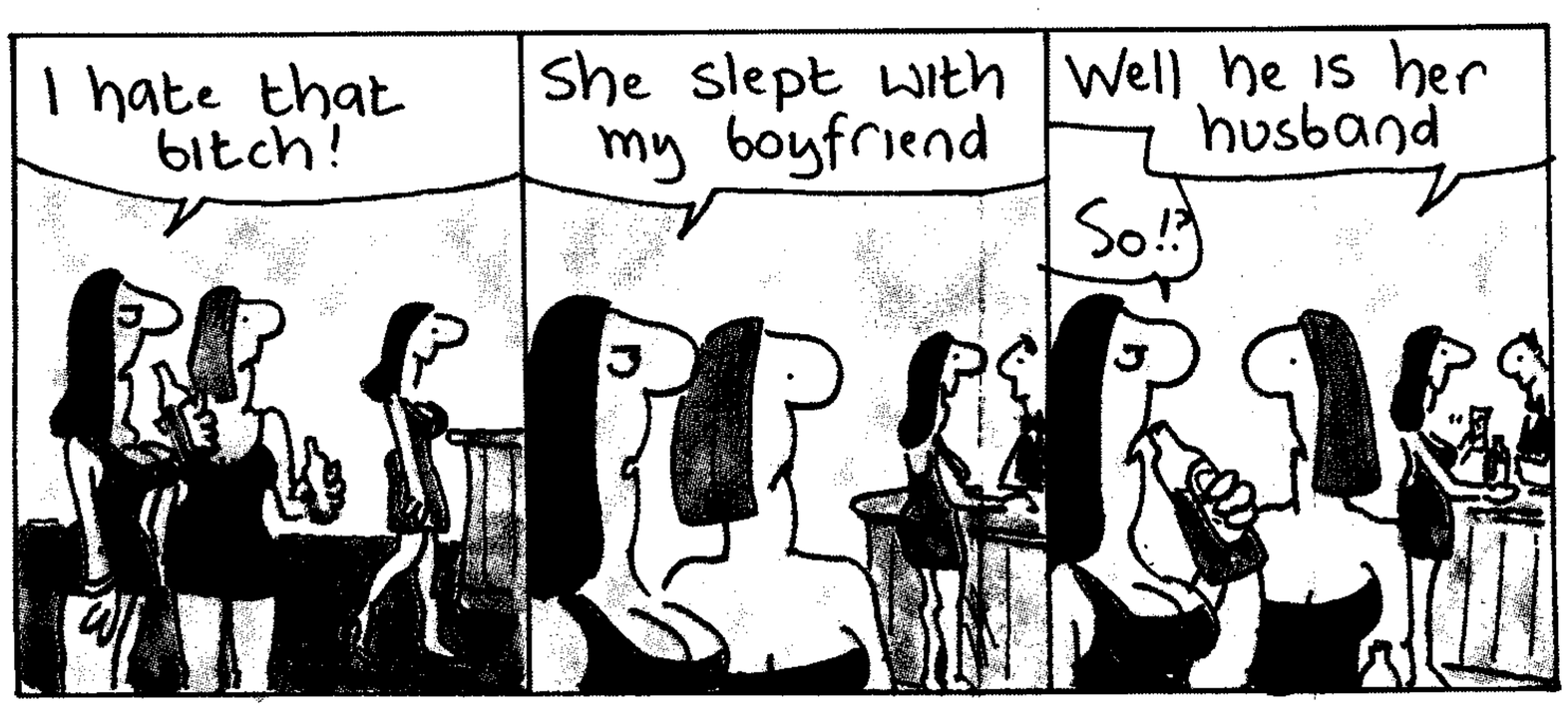
1 Non-PC gay getting some stick (6)
2 Second nature to put topless, backless bodice on oneself? (5,3)
3 Meanness defines a princess (4)
4 Tranquillity, right, is not commonly shown by hard line Islamic protestors? No (9)
5 Leader of Conservatives dogged by stink – could get fed to the dogs (4)
6 You know what you can do – ski off piste, centrally, I say, to get behind (4,2,4)
7 Shrink has soldiers put on contraceptive device (6)
8 Filthy beast's extra large sheet removed for safety reasons? (8)
14 A closet gay no longer holds student group to be markedly inferior (10)
16 Kinky Nurse Cold Arse (9)
17 Failing to get an erection with fruity bit, but not blatant about it? (4-4)
18 "Suggestive" *Independent* writer "dead" – ousted by Charles's no. 1 (8)
20 Communist article accepted by "wet" (6)
22 Cyclops Award presented to King Dick (6)
24 Get them, Roger! (4)
25 Time to leave coffee, having become stiff (4)

Crossword 317 winner: EVE JACKSON

ACROSS: 7 Twat 8 Hanky-panky 10 Columnist 12 Epoch 13 Spittle 14 Eyeball 15 Dildo 16 Faces 20 Pissoir 22 Stirrup 24 Omani 25 Footstool 26 Apocalypse 27 Talc.

DOWN: 1 Stocks 2 Call-girl 4 A piece of piss 5 Angola 6 Syphilis 9 Kitten 11/23 Metropolitan Police 15 Diplomat 17 Corporal 18 Crafty 19 Espouse 21/3 Shadow Cabinet.

HUSBAND



THE PERFECT GIFT – A PRIVATE EYE MUG

To celebrate the Eye's 45th birthday we have produced an exclusive PRIVATE EYE MUG for you to buy.

To order your earthenware mug visit

www.private-eye.co.uk

or call the credit card hotline

0870 750 1714

01795 414 870

or use the order form below.

HURRY – ONLY AVAILABLE WHILE STOCKS LAST!
PLEASE ALLOW 15 DAYS FOR DELIVERY

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS ORDER FORM AND SEND TO:
PRIVATE EYE SUBSCRIPTIONS, P.O. BOX 326, SITTINGBOURNE, KENT, ME9 8FA

☐ **YES, I WOULD LIKE TO ORDER A PRIVATE EYE MUG @ £5.99**

No. of mugs Total enclosed £

Payment method

☐ I enclose a cheque for £_____ (payable to PRIVATE EYE)

☐ MasterCard / Visa / Switch (issue no:)

Card number

☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐

Expiry date ☐☐☐☐ Switch only

Signature

Your details

Title Initial Surname

Address

Postcode

Telephone Mobile

Email

Mug recipient details

Title Initial Surname

Address

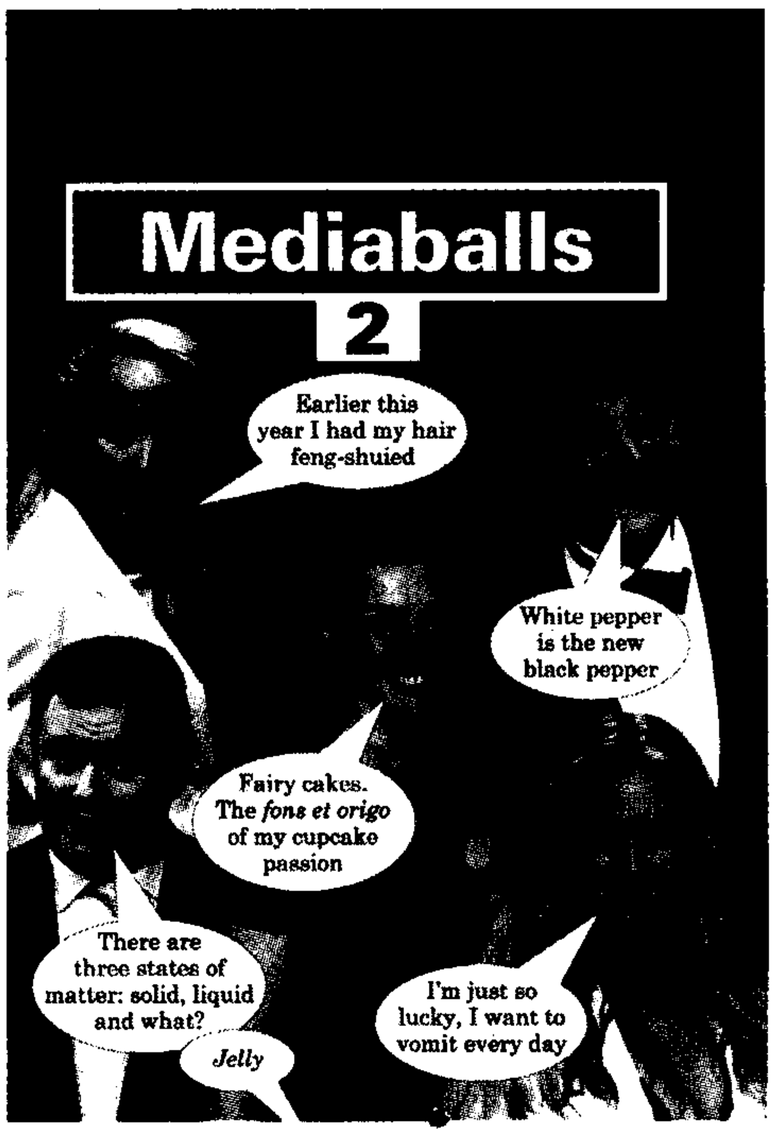
Postcode

Telephone Mobile

☐ Yes, I would like to receive news of other products and services from Private Eye.

FREE copy of MEDIABALLS 2 when you SUBSCRIBE to PRIVATE EYE

£3.99 rrp


Mediaballs
2
Earlier this year I had my hair feng-shuied
White pepper is the new black pepper
Fairy cakes. The *fons et origo* of my cupcake passion
There are three states of matter: solid, liquid and what?
Jelly
I'm just so lucky, I want to vomit every day

OFFER ENDS 1 AUGUST 2006

- SAVE OVER £12 on the cover price
- Free home delivery
- Money back guarantee on all unmailed issues if not completely satisfied

Visit: **www.private-eye.co.uk**
Call hotline now: **0870 750 1714 / 01795 414 870**
or complete the order form below.

[redacted]

☐ YES, I would like to subscribe to Private Eye and receive a FREE BOOK (sent to purchaser).

Rates: One year (26 issues): UK £24* Europe & Eire £32 Rest of world £38

[redacted]

Title Initial Surname

Address

Postcode

Telephone Mobile

Email

[redacted]

Title Initial Surname

Address

Postcode

Telephone Mobile

[redacted]

☐ I enclose a cheque for £_____ (payable to PRIVATE EYE, overseas subscribers can also pay by International Money Order)

☐ Direct Debit – just call 0870 750 1714 with your bank details or

☐ MasterCard / Visa / Switch (issue no:)

Card number

☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐

Expiry date ☐☐☐☐ Switch only

Signature

☐ Yes, I would like to receive news of other products and services from Private Eye.

Source code: N1163

"If you're alive it's the book you *have* to read. If you're dead it's the book you *should* have read."

"How To Stop Your Doctor Killing You"

Vernon Coleman

The person most likely to kill you is not a terrorist, a burglar, a deranged relative, a mugger or a drunken motorist. It's your doctor.

- Murdered in Britain each year: 859
- Killed in road accidents: 2,663
- Killed by doctors: over 20,000

Dr Vernon Coleman's worldwide best-seller explains how you can protect yourself from this serious threat to your life and good health.

- How to survive in hospital
- The real cause of cancer
- Tests and investigations – are they safe?
- Questions you must ask your surgeon
- How to get the best out of your doctor
- Ten reasons why you shouldn't trust your doctor
- Should you get a second opinion?
- Breast cancer, tranquillisers, cholesterol and Ritalin

and much, much more...245 pages

"Snappy prose and controversy expertly blended with authoritative facts. Dr Coleman's book is yet another winner ... an eclectic mix of facts we're amazed to discover with questions we've always wanted answered." *The Good Book Guide*

"(This book) has probably saved my life." *D. C., Somerset*

"Should be required reading for practitioners as well as patients – who need to be protected from our doctors." *Dr S. G., Positive Health*

"I could not put it down. Riveting. Lifted my spirits." *P. D., Sussex*

"I sent a copy to my grand-daughter in Australia. Her friends are queuing up to read it." *A. K. Devon*

"I would like you and your readers to know that here is one doctor who firmly agrees with you, particularly about doctors and drugs. Your books are a revelation and I have recommended them to patients as well as to friends and relatives." *Dr B. R. (hospital consultant)*

HOW TO ORDER

By phone using your credit card: Please call 01271 328892 and quote reference PE34 .

By fax using your credit card: Fax on 01271 328768 (any time, day or night).

By post: Send your name, address and cheque to Publishing House, Trinity Place, Barnstaple, Devon EX32 9HG, England. (Cheques for £13.99 per book, payable to *Publishing House.)*

Please quote PE34 when ordering

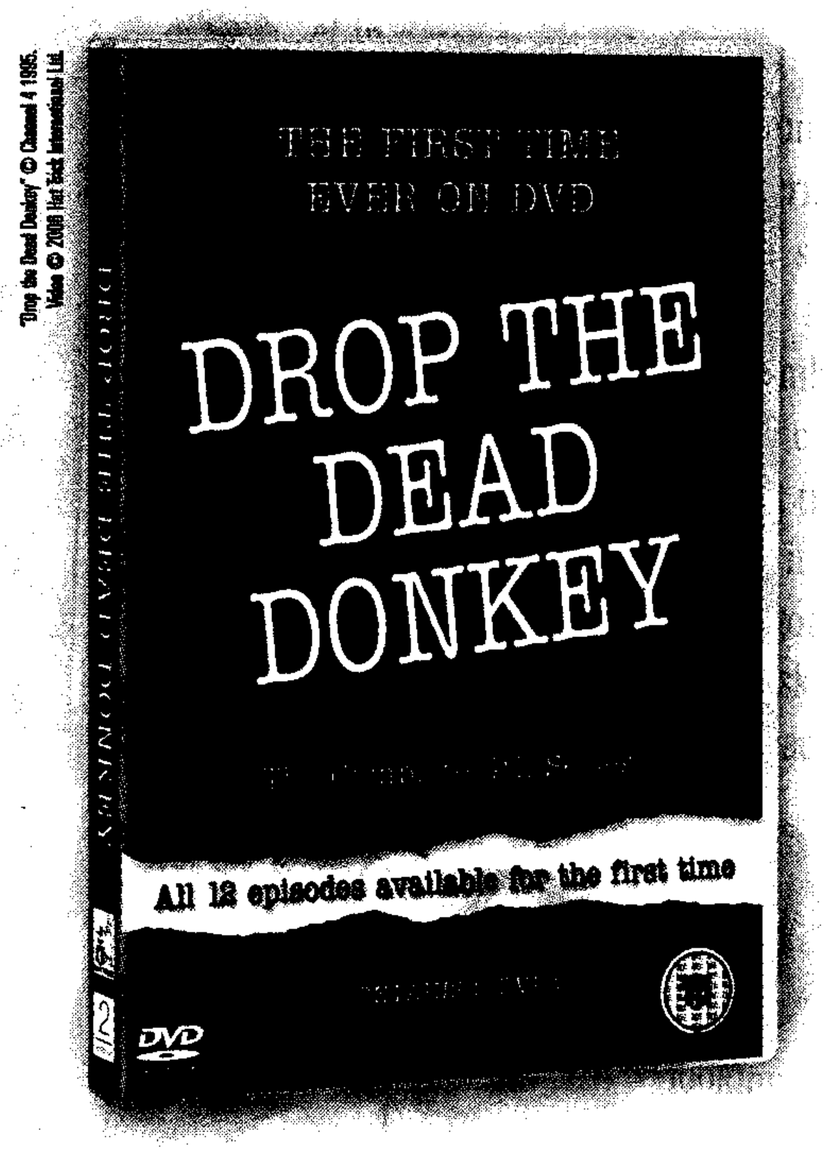
Online: Please visit www.vernoncoleman.com

How To Stop Your Doctor Killing You **costs £12.99 per copy PLUS £1 per book towards UK postage (£2 per book elsewhere). Available from all good bookshops.**

If you are not happy with your book then return it to us in good condition within 30 days for a refund of the purchase price.

"The revered guru of medicine." *Nursing Times*
"The patient's champion." *Birmingham Post*
"A godsend." *Daily Telegraph*
"Britain's leading health care campaigner." *The Sun*
"The man is a national treasure." *What Doctors Don't Tell You*

News just in... FANTASTIC COMEDY ON DVD


"Drop the Dead Donkey" © Channel 4 1995.
Video © 2006 Hat Trick International Ltd.
THE FIRST TIME EVER ON DVD
DROP THE DEAD DONKEY
All 12 episodes available for the first time
DVD

The complete fourth series on DVD for the first time.

Own it from 24th July 2006

Available at amazon.co.uk and you're done.

HAT TRICK

CLASSIC COMEDY

Jim Lawrence

lighting curtain poles curtains rugs door furniture ironmongery

For our **NEW** free brochure call **01206 265860**
or log on to **www.jim-lawrence.co.uk**

Jim Lawrence Traditional Ironwork Ltd. Scotland Hall Farm, Stoke by Nayland, Colchester, Essex CO6 4QG E-mail - sales@jim-lawrence.co.uk Fax - 01206 262166

PRI210706

THE PAUL FOOT AWARD 2006

For the second year running ***Private Eye*** and ***The Guardian*** are awarding a prize for investigative/campaigning journalism in memory of Paul Foot.

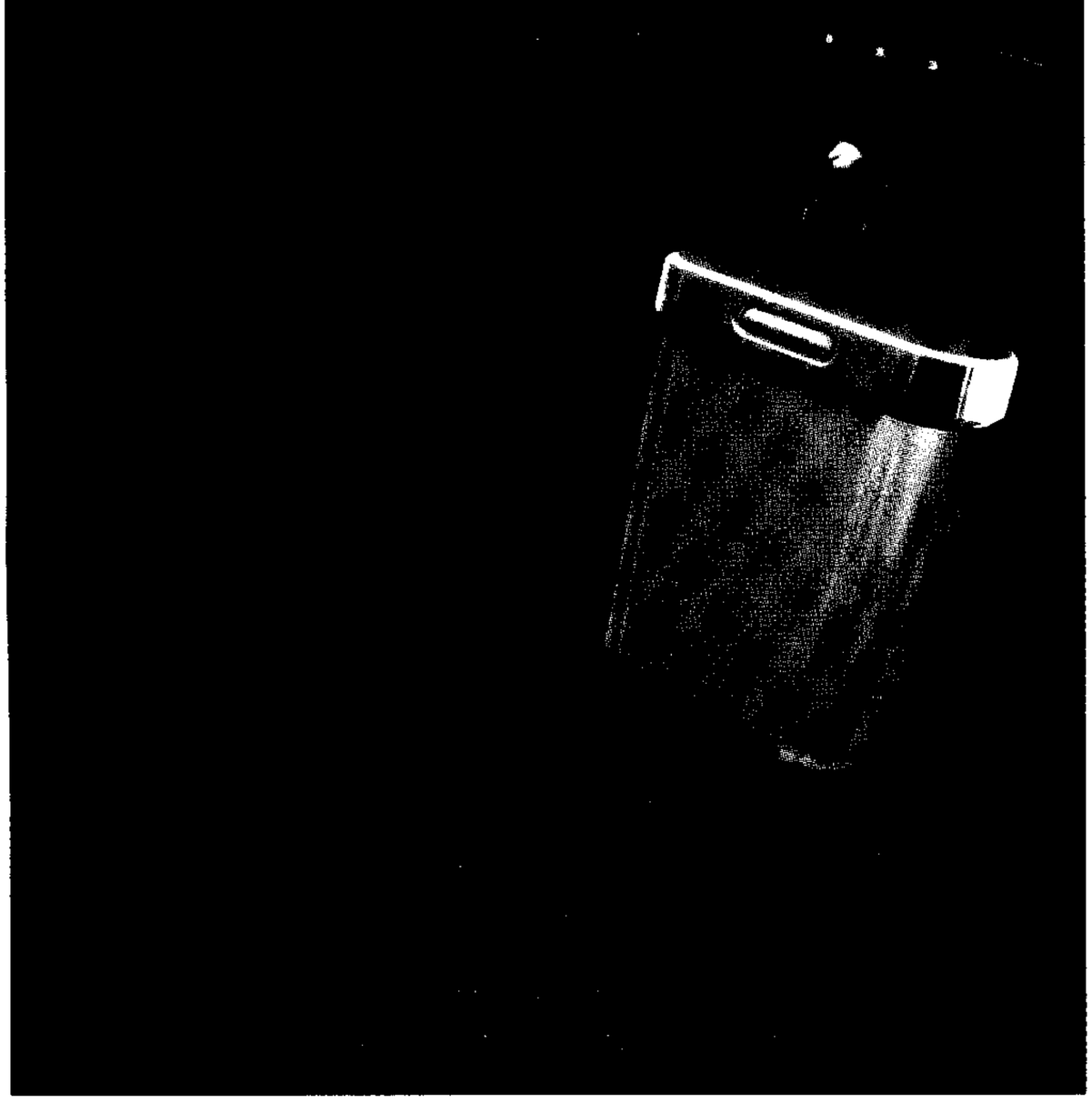
There will be an overall prize of £5000 and five runners up will also be awarded £1000 at a ceremony on 16th October to be held in London.

Submissions will be accepted for material published in a newspaper, magazine or on a website between 1st September 2005 and 31st August 2006. The closing date for entries is 1st September 2006.

For full details and application form visit
www.private-eye.co.uk

For press enquiries please call Ben Tisdall at Midas PR. Tel 020 7590 0803

Sanderson Golf



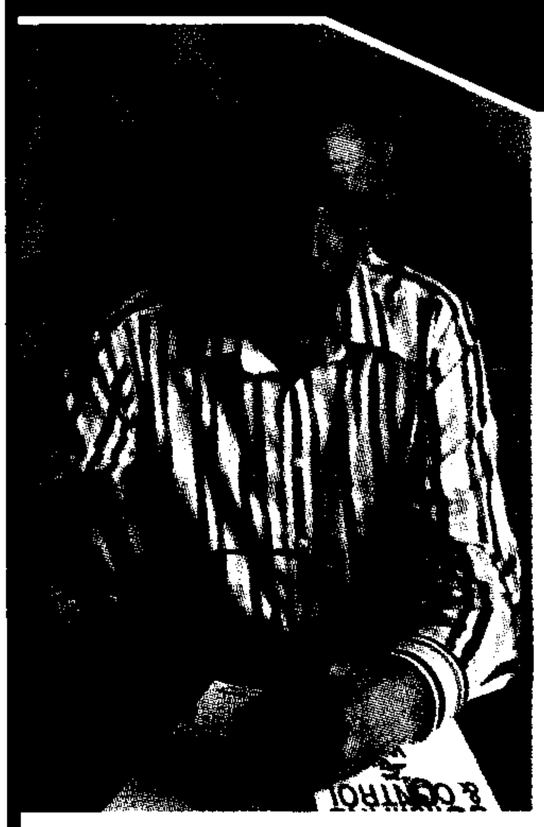
He's Back! "The man who thinks ministers should get out of management"

John Seddon

presents

The Toyota System for service organisations

Featuring leading practitioners who have changed the way they think - achieving extraordinary results



John Seddon built his reputation by translating the principles behind the Toyota Production System for service organisations. By applying these ideas, organisations are achieving levels of performance improvement that are extraordinary. Huge improvements in customer service, equally huge reductions in cost and, most striking of all, a transformation in morale.

When: **Tuesday 17th - Wednesday 18th October 2006**

Where: **Heythrop Park Conference Centre** Oxfordshire

Can you afford not to be there?

Call: **01280 822255** during office hours
or visit: **www.lean-service.com**

VANGUARD

Classified:020 7240 9129

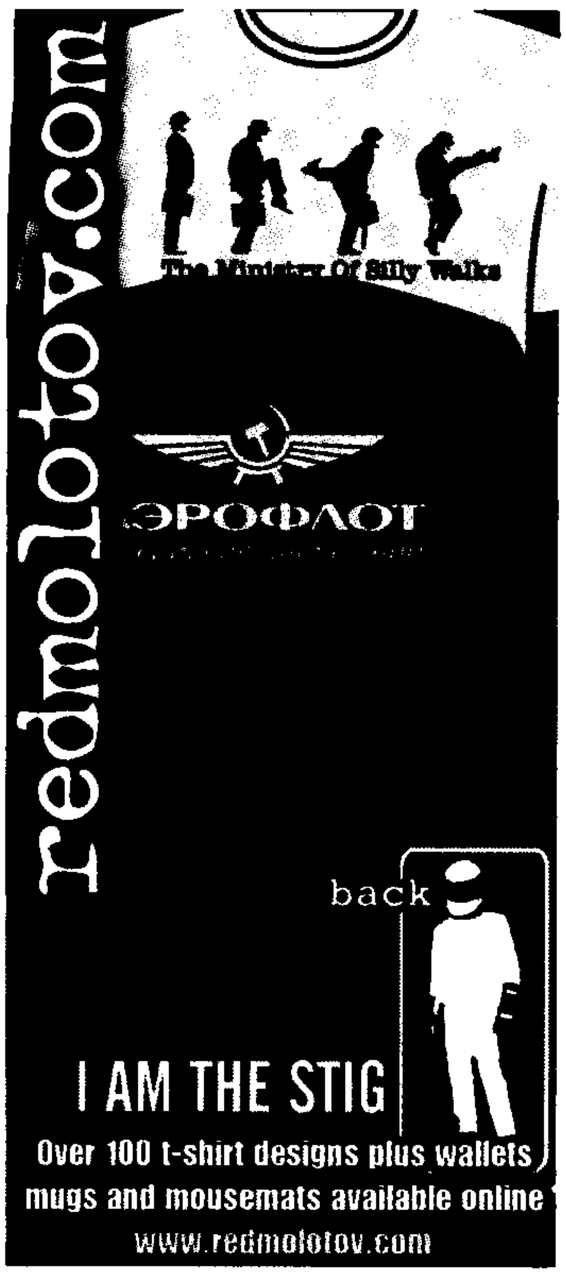
Email:private-eye@mcmslondon.co.uk

Fax: 020 7379 7118

£2.60 per word (£26 min charge). Centred box £15. Box number £15. All charges VAT inclusive.
Reply to Box number at: Private Eye, McMillan Scott, 9 Savoy Street, London WC2E 7HR

Copy date for 4 August issue will be 1pm, Tuesday 25 July

Book an advert onto this classified page and get an advert on our classified website, totally FREE OF CHARGE
To place an advert or view other online advertisers go to www.eyeadvertise.co.uk Or to discuss further, please call Damien Weafer on 020 7878 2313 Offer available for a limited period



PUKKA PYJAMAS AND NIGHTSHIRTS for men, women and boys. www.pukkapyjamas.co.uk

BORIS FOR PRESIDENT – A Bloody Good Bloke T-Shirts. www.printregister.com/boris

RESIDENTIAL DRAWING WORKSHOP in lovely north Yorkshire venue. www.flyingpencil.co.uk

MARK YARDLEY PRINTS, originals, commissions, shop online. See my portfolio at www.markyardley.com

VERY BIG PRINTS from verybigideas.com/prints Quality prints from your photos or artwork: On canvas or paper up to one metre wide.

62-YEAR-OLD-MAN. UK ICON: kind, caring romantic wishes to meet gorgeous, nice and genuine girl 19 plus, for possible long-term romance. Photos requested. Reply Box 169586.

TALL, KIND MALE, 40s seeks reasonably normal female in London. Reply Box 169801.

SINFUL NORDIC SIREN, 40, petite, youthful, seeks slim male 24-38. Reply Box 169805.

£250 + FREE BETS. Compare odds from 20 bookmakers @ www.bookies.com

ROULETTE: proven successful system / strategy for serious players. Tel: 07799 777 475.

ARE YOU A LOSER? Online poker help. www.get-even.info

GIFTS FOR THE REDHEAD in your life – www.redandproud.com – Tel: 01844 274 635.

"IT'S AN AMAZING SITE" – Angus, London www.gizmoandwidget.com Shopping for fun!

RUSSIAN AUTOMATIC WATCHES. Catalogue available (0115) 982 7741. Or visit www.russia4u.co.uk

BIRTHDAY NEWSPAPERS

Births, Birthdays, Weddings, Christenings, Anniversaries, Retirements. Papers from archives 1642-2003. Sundays from 1915. Quality presentations. Same day dispatch.

REMEMBER WHEN
445 Brighton Road, Croydon, Surrey CR2 6EU
www.remember-when.co.uk
020 8763 6363
or call FREE 0500 520 000

THE VERY FIRST
RHYTHM FESTIVAL
August 4th, 5th, 6th, 2006
Twinwood Arena, Clapham, Near Bedford

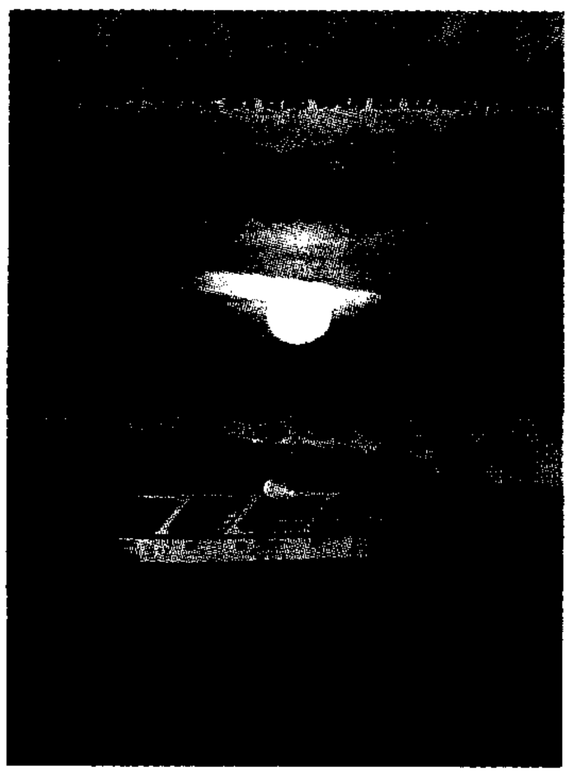
FRIDAY 4TH	SATURDAY 5TH	SUNDAY 6TH
Donovan	IKE TURNER & HIS KINGS OF RHYTHM	JERRY LEE LEWIS
ARLO GUTHRIE	ROY HARPER PLAYS 'STORMCOCK' WITH JIMMY PAGE & DAVID BEDFORD	Chas & Dave
CARA DILLON	GENO WASHINGTON & THE RAM JAM BAND	THE BLUES BAND
SETH LAKEMAN	HUGH CORNWELL	Nine Below Zero
THE STORYS	JAH WOBBLE & The English Roots Band	Wilko Johnson
JOHN OTWAY	ROGER CHAPMAN	The Men They Couldn't Hang

+ lots more... real ales, cream teas, top food, funfair, fringe activities, etc.
Weekend tickets £75, children (0-11) free with adult, day tickets from £28.
Tel: 01234 350 413
www.rhythmfestival.net

Over 50 acts on 2 music stages & more... compères include JOHN COOPER CLARKE and MIKE READ

TITLES – LORD, LADY etc. Tel/fax: 0800 652 6641. www.elitetitles.co.uk

GIFTS, GADGETS AND GAMES! Find the perfect gift at: WWW.NAFFGIFTS.CO.UK



CAPE TOWN: Two-bedroom apartment directly on the beach overlooking Table Mountain, five minutes to waterfront. www.capetownbeachapartment.com

LOOE, CORNWALL: Friendly Cornish welcome; superb harbour views. Tel: 01503 264 160 or www.visitlooe.co.uk

TRANS-SIBERIAN from Moscow to Beijing? Call 08704 424 867 for a brochure or see www.globalvillage-travel.com.

www.roundtheworldflights.com : tailor-make your own RTW or call 08704 424 867. ATOL. IATA

EVER WANTED TO VISIT a summer paradise? Now you can, www.mountainparadise.co.uk

REAL ALES & GREAT WINES? Clear air, pure water and sheer enjoyment. Colwall Park Hotel in the Malvern Hills - Restaurant of the Year and AA Courtesy & Care Awards. Gourmet breaks from £79.00 pppn 2+ nights. Tel: 01684 540000. www.colwall.com

SPAIN. ALMERIAN MOUNTAINS. Exclusive guest house. www.urra-enterprises.com

AFRICA. Tracking wild cheetahs on foot, sundowners by the waterhole, good food, great wines, stimulating company. Makulu Makete Wildlife Reserve. www.makulumakete.com pgr@worldonline.co.za

BANKRUPTCY ASSOCIATION: Established 1983. Books and advice on bankruptcy: www.theba.org.uk

READY FOR CHANGE? Confidence, relationships, career: Professional life coach. www.elspethreid.com Tel: 020 8879 7676.

LAWYER REQUIRED. Fearless of corrupt Police, CPS and Solicitors. NWNF, compensation to charity. justice2see@hotmail.com

SCOTTISH LEGAL EAGLE sought to research whether a cause of action for personal injury exists against the successor in title to an Earldom, arising out of actions that occurred in the 1920's. Serious replies only please. Reply Box 168957.

COUNSELLOR/PSYCHOTHERAPIST. Qualified, experienced, member BACP: Appointments available in Central London. Tel: 07704 862 653. www.npedwards.co.uk

If you work for BRITISH GAS (sales) email me at undart@btinternet.com

DRIVE A KNACKERED OLD BANGER? Read Original Tin magazine! www.originaltin.co.uk

SEX SELLS! Write erotic fiction for pleasure and profit. First ever online erotic writing course. Free trial available. www.wade-erotic.co.uk

AUTHOR SEEKS EXAMPLES of customer service complaint correspondence. Please post hard copies or email scanned letters with full correspondence sequence. Contributions acknowledged in the book. Thanks! Contact nick@hypnoticbusiness.co.uk

A GUARDSMAN'S LOT By Steve Rudge: Truthfully funny, harsh account of Military Bullshit and Stupidity. www.authorhouse.co.uk

Retain the regular use of The Book of Common Prayer by joining the PRAYER BOOK SOCIETY

PBS Prayer Book Society

www.prayerbook.org.uk
Tel: 01189 842582
Reg. charity no. 1099295
Company Limited by Guarantee No. 4786973

BRAIN FOR HIRE! Excellent business back-up available for start-ups to major corporates. Reasonable rates, good skills in marketing, sales, business planning, finance generation and strategy. Hands-on experience if needed, or just someone to kick ideas around. South-east based. Tel: 01273 732 277. steve.ross@thethirdhand.co.uk

I HELP PEOPLE MAKE MONEY: www.johnpassmore.co.uk

SPY EQUIPMENT, wireless cameras and receivers for all your surveillance needs. www.covertkit.com

ENERGETIC MALE (33), with history as an RSPCA Inspector and currently working for nationwide Investigations Agency, seeks full-time position in France to enable move across the Channel: Anywhere southwards of Limoges; ideas or suggestions (offers?) to pfpfpief@ic24.net. Tel: 07005 203 235.

MWT WEB DESIGN: For a quality site at a competitive price. mwtwebdesignservices@hotmail.co.uk Tel: +0044 783 332 4022.

BRITISH BUSINESSMAN resident in the USA offers assistance to your current or new business in the USA: all aspects of work considered and all levels of access available. Contact Paul Wood, pwreferee@hotmail.com

PowerPoints dull, unattractive, outdated? Let experienced PR revive your presentation - help win business - communicate better: Contact Sven on 01753 861 963.

PRIVATE INVESTMENT REQUIRED. Property based hospitality business, UK only at present, with unique model and proper track record, requires private investment - significant return offered. Contact Nigel Green, Tel: +44 (0)7989 404 535. Note: deed of confidentiality required.

LADY FRIDAY based in Central London, professional, well presented and attractive, enjoys varied workload. Minimum four hours. Hourly rate. anade777@gmail.com

YES, you can now come direct to a barrister. Tel: 020 7833 9625.

HAVE YOU BEEN LET DOWN BY YOUR SOLICITORS OR DOES YOUR SOLICITOR LACK THAT CUTTING EDGE? Ahmud & Co., the lawyers that make a difference. www.ja-solicitors.com Tel: 020 8886 1111 or enquiries@ja-solicitors.com. No legal aid.

Lost out due to bad advice?

Why don't you sue your accountant/solicitor /surveyor?

Contact: GORVINS on 0800 015 9986 or email enquiries@gorvins.com

MI5 TRIED TO KILL ME on 17 November/2001 – www.mi5.com/evidence/#ds

IF SOLDIERS AND FAMILIES couldn't trust HMG, Conservative or Labour, can you?

POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL. If anyone suspects corruption amongst officers please send details in strictest confidence to: Box 168979.

CAPITAINE: your made-up love song is pure genius. Sous-Fifre.

'FED UP MIDDLE ENGLAND'. Have your say, free, at: www.fumeintheforum.org

TERRORISED by local NHS ambulances for months. Against a senior citizen! Reply Box 169583.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY aims at building a moneyless world community based on common ownership and democratic control with production solely for use not profit. It opposes all leadership, all war. For information and sample literature write to The Socialist Party (PE), 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN. www.worldsocialism.org/spgb

***OLD PERSIAN* RUGS** – mostly £100-£3000. Shed not shop – telephone first. DESMOND NORTH, East Peckham, Kent. Telephone: 01622 871 353.

WE DON'T NEED party whips to keep our prices in line. For expert advice on hi-fi, home cinema and flat screen TVs and the UK's cheapest prices... Guaranteed, check out Richer Sounds! Call 0845 900 1230 for your nearest store or check out www.richersounds.com

THE PERFECT GIFT: Choose from a fabulous range of jewellery boxes for women, men and kids. www.boxofjewels.co.uk

MONEY TO BURN? Help our sales rocket. www.247fireworks.com Tel: 01472 358 883.

www.armybootcampfitness.co.uk Get fit, have fun and meet new people!

1970s - present day eyes for sale. Call to discuss cost. Tel: 0151 632 5037.

MOBILITY SCOOTERS, electric bikes and wheelchairs, nationwide delivery at up to 20% off retail prices. Free colour brochures. Tel: 02890 838 111 anytime.

MADONNA: WEMBLEY, 3 AUGUST. Three tickets - sell at face value - £173 each. Call 07976 942 902.

LIFESTYLE CHANGE? Rare opportunity to purchase successful, highly profitable Boarding Cattery in Bedfordshire village. Luxury three-bed home included! £725,000. Genuine cat lovers ring: 07990 803 167.

CHARMING CREATIVE seeks generous benefactor to complete masterwork. Contact adamselindistress@googlemail.com

TEACHER still has £6,000 student loans to pay. Thanks for any help. Lloyds TSB, S/C: 30-98-77. A/C: 01791993.

TRYING TO CLEAR £21K karmic debt. Any help will be so appreciated. Thank you. NatWest, S/C: 56-00-13. A/C: 96966300.

I NEED A 2ND CHANCE! Entrepreneur managing life (IVA) after years of profligacy with (now) ex-wife, needs seed corn to set up small business. Can you help? S/C: 40-07-30. A/C: 51635158.

TRYING to keep family farm afloat but running out of options. Any contributions gratefully received. S/C: 80-05-37. A/C: 00259364.

IN THERAPY, as coming to terms with sexual abuse and rape: can't work as too distressed but can't get benefits. Halifax, S/C: 11-09-17. A/C: 00190152.

ARTIST REQUIRES philanthropic benefactor to enable purchase of studio. LloydsTSB, S/C: 30-99-83. A/C: 02861005.

11K DEPOSIT, pay back with interest in three years. Tel: 07765 243 894.

ITINERANT 23-YEAR-OLD seeks interesting odd jobs. Most things considered. rousingsummerjob@gmail.com

DRUMMER WANTED. Used to be in a school band and having a mid-life crisis like us? Smutty comedy band needs you. Rehearse in Central London after work about once a fortnight. Call Simon on 07941 256 548.

SEX CHANGE MAN wants male chest reduction. Been waiting nine years on NHS. Needs £4,500 to go private. Lloyds TSB, S/C: 77-17-50. A/C: 50451060.

TRAVEL COMPANION/GHOST WRITER for World Trip. Off to have 40 extreme adventures in 40 countries, need chronicler. All expenses paid and share of book royalties. Reply Box 168963.

RECENTLY REDUNDANT, savings gone, aspiring photographer struggling with 13K debts. Please help, anything appreciated. S/C: 10-80-12. A/C: 09266113.

SITUATION CRITICAL! Back from Iraq; wife gone. Single dad, 2c, needs £10K to keep happy family together. All contributions gratefully received. HSBC, S/C: 40-47-58. A/C: 20178578.

I WAS PROUD and always worked hard but have been cheated. Have lost my business and face bankruptcy. Need £50K to save my house and family. Genuinely desperate, please help. S/C: 20-71-35. A/C: 00094382. iamdesperateforhelp@yahoo.co.uk

STARTING BUSINESS, no grants available! % return if successful. Help much appreciated. WWW.HACKERSCHOOL.CO.UK TSB, S/C: 77-15-28. A/C: 18476060.

EXHAUSTED BY FINANCIAL WOES. Please help me get a life! Abbey: S/C: 09-01-27. A/C: 00338316.

SMALL RURAL PHARMACY about to go into receivership. For sale at £250,000 plus stock! Let down by a timewaster. Increasing debts and recently divorced - 4 children. Need to sell now or £125,000 to continue. Desperate! HSBC, S/C: 40-30-23. A/C: 81081233. Reply Box 169480.

A GENUINE CRY FOR HELP: Being used as a scapegoat by government department that has virtually cost me everything. £100,000 needed desperately to save situation. Could repay in future if required. Halifax, S/C: 11-05-47. A/C: 00645104. Help.

LD WORKER beat illness but beaten by insurance company, losing everything, please help. S/C: 606040. A/C: 36126616.

LOW-INCOME FAMILY needs help to repatriate (from Belgium) and re-house Grandad, 75, to be close to family. YorkshireBdgSoc, S/C: 60-92-04. A/C: 77507434. Ref/no: 7750743410.

IMPOVERISHED YOUNG MUSICIAN needs money for bass clarinet. S/C: 16-14-16. A/C: 10074327.

10 x £1500 ONE-OFF for indebted determined / retraining positive father of two. S/C: 831919. A/C: 00251715.

ESCAPE FROM 9-5 INERTIA: need camper van, surf board, dog to break free, fulfil life dream. S/C: 30-96-35. A/C: 14235160.

TALENTED AND DEVOTED EBD teacher. 20K debt threatens career and relationship. Please help. HSBC, S/C: 40-30-18. A/C: 11125354.

OXFORD STUDENT desperately needs finance. S/C: 40-20-38. A/C: 01248065. Thanks.

FIGHTING FUND urgently needed to battle greedy lawyers. HSBC, S/C: 40-47-78. A/C: 40862215.

WRITER SEEKS GARRET on friendly terms. Tel: 07980 827 987.

FAMILY STRUGGLING, PLEASE HELP me to clear our debts. S/C: 40-17-08. A/C: 91338900. Thank you.

HELP. £1500 A MONTH NEEDED for next 2 years. Susiepop. S/C: 08-92-86, A/C: 12098356. Thank you.

DESPERATE TO CLEAR spiralling debt, urgently need £10,000. Please, please help! HSBC, S/C: 40-36-15. A/C: 42091127.

BRIGHT 30-YEAR-OLD needs help paying scholl fees. Any help gratefully received. S/C: 07-01-16. A/C: 47097529. blindspott@hotmail.co.uk

HIGHFIELD YOUTH CENTRE, Hemel Hempstead. Promised funding withdrawn by Tory Council. Have cash for furnishing. Need Building fund, 500,000 pounds. Registered Charity No.1033277. Email: geofflawrence@dsl.pipex.com

TRYING TO WIN A COMPETITION. Need hits to my website. Please go to www.miripips.co.uk

DESPERATE FOR FINANCIAL AID to assist with burgeoning MA costs. Any help appreciated. HSBC, S/C: 40-02-25. A/C: 71237144.

DEBTS RECOVERED / PEOPLE FOUND. No trace, no fee. Former police detective, LLB (Hons) www.debtrecoveryuk.biz Phone 0870 888 8001.

Does your Voice hold the key?

See what you could unlock with an **Introduction to Voice-over** training course in a Soho Sound Studio.

Don't keep those talents hidden!

Read all about it at: www.voxtraining.com or call 020 7434 4404

IR35: EMPLOYMENT STATUS: CIS: TERMINATION PAYMENTS. Let the real expert deal with it. Ex Tax Inspector who specialised in all subjects has taken early retirement and is available for consultation. Contact Douglas Seaton on 01355 249958 or 07984 617 066: doogz5@hotmail.com GUARANTEED. I know more about it than your accountant.

WORRIED ABOUT YOUR DRIVING TEST? Visit www.drivingtestadvice.com/ Problem solved.

WRITING YOUR MEMOIRS / autobiography? Experienced editorial support. Bridget Holding, call 01830 867 340. bridgetholding@dial.pipex.com

LINK INVESTIGATIONS: Private Investigators, Researchers, Genealogists. Tel: 01342 719 361. Fax: 01342 719 641. Email: info@linkinvestigations.co.uk Website: www.linkinvestigations.co.uk

VAT PROBLEMS? Taxman on your case? Speak to Eamon McNicholas. www.EamonMcNicholas.com

Humorous Speechwriter

www.brianjenner.com Tel 01202 551257

CREDITORS THREATENING? Avoid bankruptcy / IVA. Confidential, discreet debt solutions. Call 0800 9700 750.

GREAT SPEECH WRITING: "Incredibly, I gave the best best man's speech I'd ever heard!" Mark B, 2006. Want help writing your wedding or event speech? Lawrence: 07970 046 230. www.greatspeechwriting.co.uk

A GALLIMAUFRY of services for Business and Private Clients from www.moon-craft.co.uk Go on.

AFTER DINNER SPEAKER. Golf clubs, private parties, audience participation. www.tommycooperremembered.co.uk

MENNA MATURE mixed oriental visiting massage. Professional service. Tel: 07837 560 761.

LOVING LINKS. UK's leading discreet adult dating service since 1994. Unique top level one-to-one matching service and fast online email system. Call David for a chat on 08456 440 919.

A TEAM OF qualified masseuses offer a genuine, relaxing and uplifting massage. Tel: 020 7706 2318 or 07789 824 854. www.exoticmassage.co.uk

VERY UNUSUAL MALE seeks female for a bit of adventurous and unusual trainspotting. Tel: 07944 384 768.

LONESOME OXBRIDGE BLUES? Why not meet somebody new at www.BluesMatch.com

MEET ORIENTAL LADIES in London / South East. Tel: 01483 284 123 or www.jasminintroductions.com

ENGLISH THERAPIST: Relax and be pampered in Chelsea. Visits also available. Tel: 07932 939 227

RUSSIAN LADIES, attractive and sincere, seek relationship / marriage. Meet many Russian ladies in Britain. Unlimited introductions. Excellent success rate. IFM 01708 478697. www.intromoscow.co.uk

CULTURED, WELL-SPOKEN Englishman, youthful 50, seeks intelligent, curvaceous, retroglamorous temptress who enjoys traditional luxury. gallenus@btinternet.com

MASSAGE: CLASSY, PROFESSIONAL lady to visit you in the Oxfordshire / Gloucestershire / Buckinghamshire / Berkshire area: Call: 07900 840 310 or 01865 557 233.

SPEED DATING for grown -ups! Stylish parties in London and other UK Cities for the over 35's. Complimentary bar! Book NOW! www.kcdating.co.uk Tel: 01728 635 064 or 07986 213 120. www.kcdatingonline.co.uk

ELEGANT ENGLISH BLONDE, 32, living in Knightsbridge seeks affluent gentleman for occasional entertaining times together. Tel: 07900 622 598.

LONDON MAN, 46, seeks lady to wine, dine, etc. Contact oscarandlucinda@hotmail.co.uk

To place your classified ad call Damien Weafer on 020 7240 9129

Now with
quality sound
in an extra room
FOR FREE!*

KITCHEN

ENTRANCE

LIVING ROOM

entertainment systems combine
innovations that make
home theatre uncomplicated
complete home
performance and
are

BOSE® LIFESTYLE® 48
DVD home entertainment system
Hideaway ACOUSTIMASS®
module is not shown

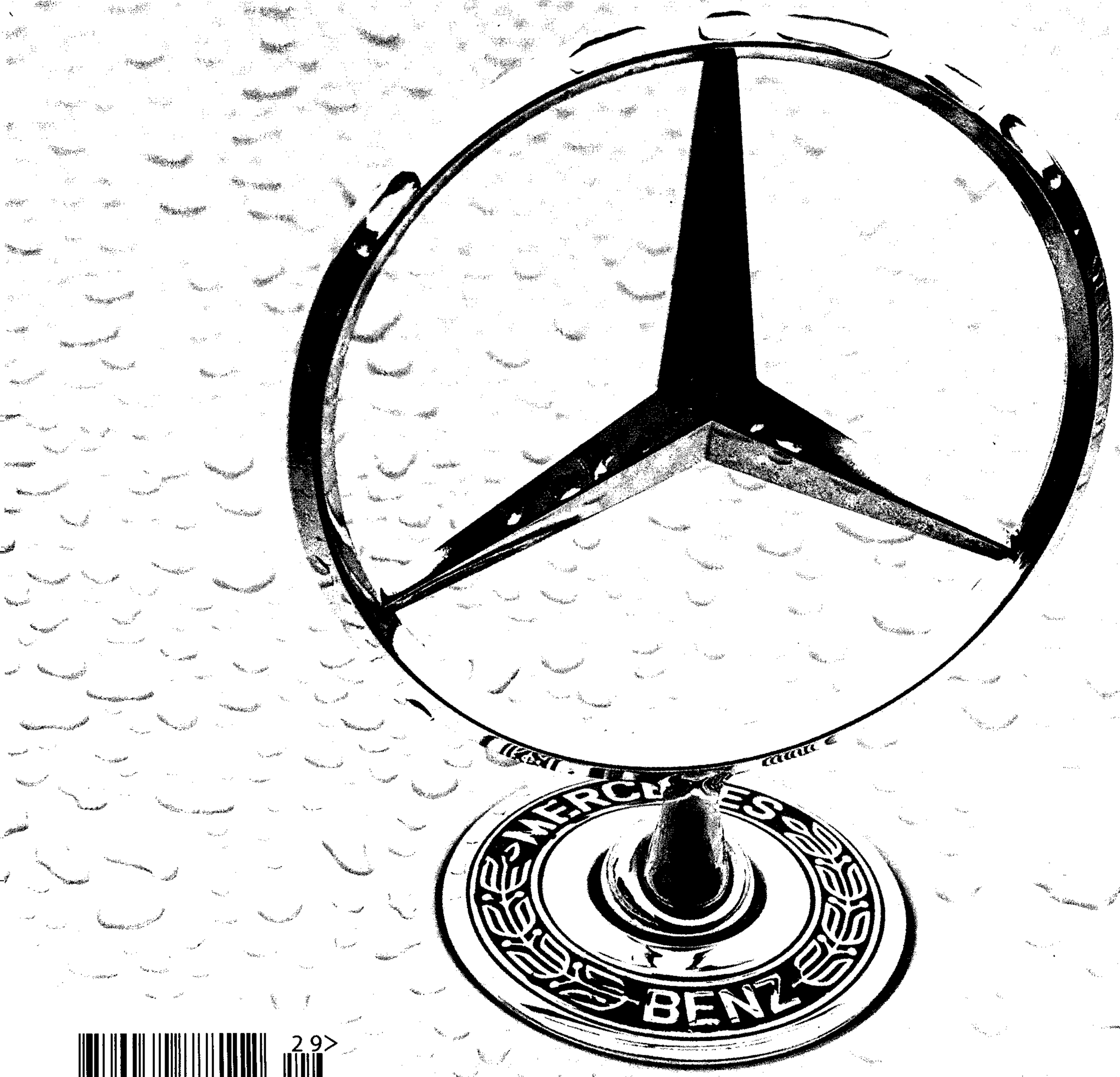
LIFESTYLE 34 64118

Less rain where you see this sign.

From A-Class through to S-Class, you know you're getting something special: a Mercedes-Benz. We can't do anything about the weather. What we can do is design our cars so that rain stays off the side windows for improved visibility. Visit our interactive website and discover the attention to detail that goes into all of our passengers cars.

Mercedes-Benz

Visit **www.mercedes-benz.co.uk/a-to-s**, call **0800 66 54 18** quoting sign 107 or text sign to **64500.**



9 770032 888112 29>

OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT FUEL CONSUMPTION FIGURES (MPG/LITRES PER 100KM) FOR THE MERCEDES-BENZ PASSENGER CAR RANGE: URBAN 45.6-12.1/6.2-23.4, EXTRA URBAN 65.7-27.2/4.3-10.4, COMBINED 57.6-18.7/4.9-15.1. CO2 EMISSIONS 128-362 G/KM.